THE PATTIMURA REVOLT OF 1817

Its Causes, Course and Consequences

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the "Pattimura" Revolt which broke out at the end of the British Interregnum, in 1818, when the Moluccas were handed back to the Dutch.

The dissatisfaction that led to the revolt was in part religious and in part economic. The thesis traces the causes of this dissatisfaction to the Christianisation of the islands and the consequent neglect of the Ambonese church by the Dutch rulers particularly in the 18th century. This affected the position of, in particular, the schoolmaster/pastors who, with the Regents, constituted the highest indigenous leaders of the community. Many of the leaders of the revolt came from this group.

Oppression may have been part of the system - but this was not realised till the British came along. The British relaxation of the rule of the previous Dutch regime resulted in apprehension when it became known that the Dutch were returning. This, combined with the incompetence of the officials who took over from the British, plus the agitation of the disgruntled members of the disbanded native battalion, founded by the departing British government, led to the bloody revolt of 1817. The course of this revolt is traced in some detail, from the earlier successes of Matulesia to the final defeat of the revolutionaries. Finally the immediate and long range consequences are explored.

The conclusion arrived at is that the revolt, which is seen as something of an aberation after three hundred years of contact - symbiosis perhaps describes it better than co-operation or collaboration - with the Europeans, had the

seemingly controversial effect of strengthening the bond between the Dutch and the South Moluccans. It is argued that the population, hereafter, began to realise that there was not much prospect for them in the cultivation of spices for European markets, but that close co-operation with the Dutch government in military and civil services, would give them the scope they felt their special position as a Christian minority in an overwhelmingly Muslim Indonesian archipelago warranted.

LIST OF MAPS

GLOSSARY

Adat: A number of meanings hide behind this word. It is used in the sense of culture in the general sense, but it is also used in the more limited sense of rule of law, a less formal "code of (good) behaviour". Adat is very clearly pre-Christian and certainly in contention with Christian (and surely Calvinistic) theology. This, however, does not seem to be a problem for most Ambonese. Protestantism of a Calvinist/fundamentalist nature is simply fitted together with ancient pre-Christian notions. It can, in many aspects, be compared with the Maori tapu.

Atap: Woven split bamboo mats used for external house walls.

Dendeng: Sun-dried meat.

Doits: The smallest coin in circulation in nineteenth century Ambon.

Dusun Dati: Communal land holdings.

Gaba-gaba: Mats woven of the mid-ribs of palm leaves used for interior house walls.

Hongi: Fleet.

Kepala Soa: Head of a neighbourhood.

Kora Kora: Large (usually war) prahu.

Negory: Village. The word is derived from the Malay word Negara - District.

Orangkaya: One of the titles for a village Head. The word literally means "rich man".

Orembaai: Large prahu, smaller than the Kora-kora.

Patti: Title of village headman. More important than Orangkaya.

Picul: Load = 60 lbs.

Raja: Highest title of village heads. Collectively village heads are referred to as Regents.

Tua Agama: Religious leader.

Tuangku: Muslim religious leader.

INTRODUCTION

The archives in Indonesia and especially in The Hague are literally bulging with documents and collections pertaining to Ambon. Much research has been done on those of the first hundred and fifty years of Portuguese and Dutch supremacy in these Spice Islands, but the archives from the period from about 1650 to about 1770, or even 1800, are still awaiting the attention of historians. The very extent of this project is too daunting and few, even if they had the inclination, would have the time available. There is enough material available there to keep ten researchers busy for a lifetime. The period from about 1800 has been rather better covered, but there is still room for an archivally based study of the 1817 revolt in the Moluccas, known as the Pattimura Revolt.

This rebellion flared up during a relatively short period, from 14 May until 26 November 1817. Thomas Matulesia[1], who had been a sergeant major in the Ambon Corps during the period of British rule in the Moluccas, was elected as leader, or Kapitan, of this revolt. The revolt

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[1] There is some confusion about the name Pattimura. Thomas Matulesia does not seem to have used it personally. In the author's discussion with Moluccan historians the matter did not become much clearer. Richard Leirissa, of the Universitas Indonesia, maintains that the name is an honorary title derived from the words Patti = Leader or Chief, and Murah = cheap or easy - thus indicating a natural leader. Dr Manusama, author of a Ph. D. thesis on the Hikayat Tanah Hitu, maintains that it was simply his middle name, as it appears on his baptismal certificate. Although the name Pattimura is now in common use, the name Matulesia will generally be used hereafter in this study to avoid confusion, since all historical documents relating to him use the latter name.

was fierce. Matulesia, who had military skills and expertise, won the first battles, but plans were not co-ordinated. Once the Dutch brought in reinforcements they put the revolt down ruthlessly and Pattimura and his chief lieutenants paid for it with their lives.

The social ferment which preceded the outbreak of this rebellion had its roots well into the past - the immediate "British" past as well as the more distant "Dutch" past. The writer had the good fortune to be able to study a number of documents especially on the revolt itself, in the Rijksarchief in The Hague. These form the basis of this study. Both Ambon Commissioners, Van Middelkoop and Engelhard, wrote extensive Reports on their role in the revolt. There are also several reports by Commissioner Buyskes, who was sent to Ambon to quell the uprising. These reports help to put the reports of Van Middelkoop and Engelhard in perspective. From the side of the rebels, not much written material has survived (probably not a great deal ever existed); but the "Porto Report", generally thought to have been written by the schoolmaster of Porto or Haria, describes events from the viewpoint of the islanders and a document written by Matulesia and signed by 21 Chiefs, Rajas, Pattis and Orangkayas, sets out the Fourteen Points of complaint of the population. The author has also spent some time in the India Office Records in London, attempting to trace the "British" background to the revolt. A brief visit to Indonesia yielded a certain amount of printed material, but the author was unable, in the time available to him, to gain access to the Arsip Nasional in Jakarta. He has been assured[2], however,

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[2] By Richard Leirissa of the Universitas Indonesia.

that copies of most of the relevant material - certainly quite enough for the writer of an M.A. thesis to cope with - are to be found in The Hague.

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To what extent may a student of the 1817 Ambon rebellion obtain an understanding of that revolt through comparing it with other colonial revolts?

The nineteenth century saw a number of revolts and wars throughout Indonesia. It can be seen, in fact, as one long period of social unrest[3]. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century Indonesia had been the domain of the Dutch East India Company, a trading company that was content, by and large, to leave princes, rajas and sultans to run their own states. The Company's interest was in trade and as long as native rulers delivered the goods they were generally left alone. The situation in Ambon was different. Because of the Clove-monopoly that the Company was prepared to defend against all comers, these islands were actively governed by the Company since 1605. The collapse of the Dutch East India Company changed all this. On 1 January 1800 the Dutch Government took over, establishing a Colonial Government and the growing impact of the West resulted in extensive social change.

Many of the conflicts in the Dutch Indies in the nineteenth century had common characteristics. They were

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[3] The numerous rebellions in Java during the period 1840-1875 are listed by J.de Waal, Onze Indische Financiën Vol. I, pp. 228-229. In only six years of this period did no uprisings occur.

generally short-lived and lacked modern features, such as planned organisation, modern ideologies and nationwide agitation[4]. The leaders generally lacked the understanding of politics to make realistic plans in the event of success and these risings were therefore doomed to failure and the tragic sequel of repression that followed all these outbreaks.

The Pattimura Revolt in the Moluccas exhibited many - but by no means all - of the features of peasant revolts elsewhere in Indonesia and beyond[5]. The villagers did not know what they were fighting for; they had a vague desire to overthrow the government but did not feel consciously that they were taking part in a social revolutionary movement. Economic, social, religious and political grievances played their role.

Yet the Ambonese revolt differed greatly from the disturbances in other parts of nineteenth century Indonesia and elsewhere in many other respects. Whilst in the context of contact between Western and Indonesian cultures peasant risings may be seen as protest movements against intruding Western economic and political control, which were undermining the fabric of traditional society, the situation in the South Moluccas was different. There the impact of colonisation, and of the Christianisation that was an integral part of it, eventually totally destroyed Moluccan traditional society. Whatever else the Ambonese fought for in 1817, it was not for a return of the pre-European past. In some ways the Ambonese were in a position comparable to the New Zealand Maori in the later years of the nineteenth century. By this time the

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[4] S.Kartodirdjo, The Peasant Revolt in Banten in 1888 p.2. See also S.Kartodirdjo, Protest Movements in Rural Java, which, however, deals mainly with twentieth century revolts.

[5] ibid.

Maori's en bloc acceptance of Christianity and the European economy had effectively destroyed their pre-colonial society. Such a point can be made even more emphatically about the Ambonese. Three centuries separated them from their pre-colonial past.

There seems to be a tendency for writers on nineteenth century Indonesia not to differentiate between wars of conquest between states and popular revolts against established governments. While it is possible, to some degree, to compare Pattimura's revolt with that of Tuanku Iman Bondjol, the leader of the Padri revolt in Sumatra, in that both rose against their colonial rulers and both rebellions had strong religious overtones, there are no parallels between these uprisings and, say, the Java War of Dipo Nègoro or the war of Sultan Hasanudin of Macassar. But even the similarities between the Padri War and the Matulesia Revolt are feeble. The Minangkabau district in Sumatra, where the Padri War broke out, always remained mutiny-inclined and developed into a strong nationalistic and independence minded area[6]. The history of the South Moluccas in the following century and a half took an entirely different course.

The Ambon revolt of 1817, then, while it may be seen to some extent in a wider Indonesian context, and in the context of anti-colonial revolts in general, has a distinct autonomy, a uniqueness, of its own.

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[6] See Christina Dobbin: Islamic revivalism in a changing economy: Central Sumatra (1784-1847) and p.136 of the present work.

One further problem of interpretation must be dealt with here. Modern Indonesia represents Pattimura as one of its national heroes, as the freedom fighter who set Indonesia on the first steps of the road to eventual independence. Even an historian of Dutch origin has argued that Matulesia's revolt was "a potential conduit that would have connected the aspirations and development of his own people with those of the broader Indonesian world around them".[7] There can of course be little question that Pattimura represented something of Moluccan consciousness, whether articulate and sharply formulated or not. But Pattimura was essentially a regional or ethnic hero. The writer believes that it is wrong to see him as imbued with strong "All Indonesian" nationalist sentiments.

Pattimura lost his revolution and the Moluccas remained, for several decades, subjected to monopolies and compulsory deliveries. The continued financial straits the Dutch colonial administration found itself in did not allow for an easing up on the system. As a result the Moluccan economy continued to be stunted and the steady disorganisation of its society in the following decades was a reflection of the ongoing weakness and disintegration of its economy. In the later decades of the nineteenth century the comparatively infertile Moluccan islands saw their inhabitants drift away; increasingly they sought employment in the Dutch colonial army or entered the lower ranks of the civil service. As mercenaries and junior administrators whose plodding devotion to the Dutch overlords in campaigns and outposts, from one end of Indonesia to the other, earned the Moluccas the name

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[7] J.M. van der Kroef. "Two forerunners of Modern Indonesian Independence" The Australian Journal of Politics and History. Vol.VIII, No. 1, May 1961, p.160.

of being Holland's "Twelfth Province", they became an element apart in the developing nationally conscious world of the twentieth century. They came to regard their Christian faith as a mark of superiority over other, Muslim, Indonesians.

A natural consequence of this development was the refusal of the Ambonese and the other South Moluccans, to be incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia when it came into being in December 1949.

The seeming paradox of the Ambonese, suppressed for centuries, who yet became loyal supporters of the Dutch is part of the background, and indeed one of the themes, of this study.

There are writers like B.van Kaam[8] who argue that the Ambonese loyalty was a myth, fostered by Dutch propaganda during their colonial rule and believed by the inhabitants of other parts of the archipelago, who mostly came into contact with Moluccans who had served in the colonial army or civil service. But such writers have set themselves a very difficult task.

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From this introduction it will be clear that the purpose of this study is not only to describe what happened and when, but also how and why. There are obvious questions of causation and conditional factors. Our first aim must be to uncover the various lines of development and to disclose the mounting tendency towards rebellion. It is to this matter that we now turn.

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[8] B. van Kaam, Ambon door de Eeuwen. (1977) p.3.

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING

The island of Amboina has an area of only 761 square kilometres while each of the other three islands in the Uliasan group is even smaller. In 1855 Amboina's population numbered nearly 28 000, Saparua just over 10 000, Haruka slightly over 7 000 and Nusa Laut almost 3 500. Thus the islands were thinly populated[1]. Most of the people lived in the beach villages, partly because earlier the Dutch East India Company (V.O.C.) had forcibly compelled a large part of the population to move from the interior to the coast, in order to facilitate the exercise of stricter control over the growing of the cloves.

The island of Amboina consists of a smaller southern peninsula called Leitimor and a larger northern one called Hitu, joined by a narrow isthmus known as the Baguala Pass. This pass is a mere one kilometre long and light boats were often man-handled across, to shorten the sea route from Ambon to the other islands in the group very considerably. The Bay of Ambon penetrates deeply between the two parts and it is on the shores of this bay that the principal town, Ambon, was located.

Although the climate is favourable, the condition of the soil is unsuitable for the more intensive varieties of agriculture or for horticulture. The soil consists mainly of coral sand; the volcanic soil that constitutes the wealth of

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[1] H.Kroeskamp, Early Schoolmasters in a Developing Country. p.49.

the Indies is almost completely absent here. The land is most suitable for forestry; hence the extensive sago groves which, even today, supply the staple food for many of the population[2]. This throws perhaps a different light on the complaint so often made by government officials, that the "laziness and indolence" of the natives was to blame for the poor results achieved with the introduction of new crops such as coffee, pepper or indigo, by the V.O.C. or the later East Indian Government. The report of an agricultural scientist in 1929 confirms that the ground is not capable of producing much beyond sago and cassava[3]. Although sago is usually considered a poor diet, Olivier[4], who visited the Moluccas in 1824, argued that contrary to popular belief, he could not agree that sago is the poorest of all cereals (sic) since he found the health of the inhabitants to be robust.

Land belonging to the ordinary people in the Moluccas had always been held communally. This applied to the sago groves as well as the waste lands. The village was divided into a fixed number of dati or family groups, each of which had the hereditary usufruct of certain lands, the so called dusun dati. Usually these were planted with sago trees to provide the main food crop. The village, however, retained the right of ownership of the dusun dati in the same way as it exercised this right in respect of its wastelands where villagers could assert an equal and joint right of use. As

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[2] A.J.Beversluis & A.H.Gieben. Het Gouvernement der Molukken. pp. 79-80.

[3] A.J.Koens in Soerabaiaans Handelsblad, 28 Jan. 1929. The author is indebted to Drs G.Knaap of Leiden for drawing his attention to this.

[4] J.Olivier Jnz. Land- en Zeetochten in Nederlansch Indie. (1830) p.46.

the islands in the Ambon or Uliasan group themselves did not supply sufficient sago to meet the requirements of the population, each year numerous families, sometimes even whole villages, crossed over to their dusuns on Ceram, "the country overflowing with sago", to beat sago to supplement their stocks[5]. Rice had been imported into the Moluccas for centuries, mainly from Java, but it had always been a luxury item, never a staple.

The Burger class, which will be discussed later in this chapter, stood outside the village communities and had therefore no claim on the product of the communal land.

The name "Moluccas" is generally accepted to refer to the entire island world between Celebes and New Guinea with the Banda islands as the southern boundary. The concept "Moluccas" has since time immemorial been identified with the concept "Spice Islands" i.e. the islands which of old were the sole producers of cloves, nutmeg and mace. These were Ternate, Tidore and Bachan and later the Ambon or Uliasan islands and the Banda group. Because of its valuable produce, traders from all parts of Indonesia, and well beyond, have always been attracted to the Moluccas. Plinius Major in 75 A.D. mentions cloves, thus proving that trade links between the Moluccas and the more "civilised" western part of the Indonesian Archipelago, which had trade links with Persia, are at least two thousand years old.

Over the centuries in spite of a long history of Christianization and Islamization, there has been rivalry between the ancient tribal divisions of the Ulisiwa, or League of Nine, and the Ulilima or League of Five. This

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[5] Kroeskamp (1974) p.51.

division in two groups conforms to the ancient Ambonese cosmology with its classification system. It divides the cosmos into contrasts which have to be balanced because violation of the harmony causes harmful consequences for society[6]. This has been presented as a kind of unity in diversity but in reality unity was completely absent. The inhabitants of Hitu belonged to the Ulilima while those of Leitimor belonged to the Ulisiwa. The Sultan of Ternate considered himself and his subjects Ulilima, which gave him the overlordship of Hitu; The Dutch East India Company (hereafter V.O.C.), as an ally of the people of Leitimor, was considered to be Ulisiwa. The fact that the Ulilima embraced Islam while the Ulisiwa became Christians did nothing to alleviate the old tensions. While the Christians of Leitimor, in due course, formed a strong attachment to the Dutch royal house, the memory of the Kingship of the Sultan of Ternate never died completely in Hitu[7].

Islam had come to Indonesia with Arab and Indian traders in the period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. In the Moluccas it was gradually accepted by the coast dwellers but the mountain tribes and the inland regions generally remained aloof. The influence of Islam affected the entire Moluccan society; for one thing, it was now governed by laws of a more stable nature than had hitherto existed.

The clove tree originally was native only to Ternate, Tidore and Batchan. As yet untrammeled by monopolies, the people of the Ceram peninsula of Haomoal, realizing its

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[6] Z.J.Manusama, "Hikayat Tanah Hitu", Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Leiden University (1977) p.I (Summary).

[7] See p.35.

value, transplanted the clove culture to their land and from there it spread rapidly to Ambon and the rest of the Uliasan islands, which now contained their share in the general growth of prosperity of the area.

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The Portuguese, under Vasco de Gama, reached India in 1498, established their headquarters at Goa in 1510 and took and settled Malacca in 1511. Realizing that spice prices in the Moluccas were considerably cheaper they soon put in an appearance there. At first relations with the local people were harmonious; the Portuguese paid reasonable prices for cloves and nutmeg and trading did not lead to any trouble. Before long, though, religion did.

When Pope Alexander VI in 1493 partitioned the known world "with all its gold, spices and all manner of precious things" between Portugal and Spain, he imposed the condition that they should "exert all diligence in converting people of their new territories and ... institute them in the catholic faith and good manners".[8]

The Portuguese took this very seriously and established contact with indigenous people through the work of their missionaries. This contact was closest in the case of tribes with "primitive" religions or, in India, with lower caste Hindus. With the passing of time, the efforts by the missionaries to obtain converts became marked by excesses which not only defeated the original purpose, but also assumed greater significance as Portuguese pestige waned.

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[8] The Papal Bull of 4 May, 1493.

On the Leitimor peninsula, on which Ambon town is situated, the population, whose religion was animistic, accepted Christianity readily, but the Muslim population of Hitu peninsula strongly opposed Christianity which became the prime cause of their alienation from the Portuguese.

The missionary zeal of the Portuguese was not exclusively "ad majorem Dei gloriam", but, from their point of view, it was also good politics; Christian natives almost automatically became enemies of the Muslims, the most feared opponents of the Portuguese, and thus automatic allies.

In order to have a ready made Christian Colony on hand when they established themselves on Ambon, a colony which would act as a bulwark against the Muslims and perhaps as a catalyst for the Ambonese to adopt Christianity themselves, the Portuguese had brought with them seven Ternatese Catholic families. These were granted many privileges; they did not have to render compulsory labour services, they were allowed to ply a trade, own businesses and slaves and they were granted a plot of land near the Portuguese fort on which to build houses and establish gardens. Their settlement became Kampong Mardika (from the Sanskrit Mardaheka = free from servitude) and until the present day the Mardika district still exists in Ambon[9].

The Portuguese now had a virtual monopoly in the spice trade, but this did not last into the seventeenth century. Shortages of man-power and shipping, widespread corruption and private trading by officers of the crown and clergy

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[9] G.F. de Bruyn Kops, Eenige Greepen uit de Geschiedenis der Ambonsche Schuttery. Amboyna (1895) pp. 8-13.

alike[10], but most of all the political and economic developments in Europe, were the reasons.

When Philip II succeeded to the Portuguese throne in 1580, he drew that country into his wars against England and France as well as his own rebellious subjects in the Netherlands, and this made its coveted spice trade a legitimate war-price for these powers, because of their supremacy at sea.

As the power of the Dutch in the sixteenth and seventeenth century increased, they gained their independence from Spain and at the same time replaced the Portuguese in the Malayo-Indonesian part of Asia, establishing forts and factories in Java and Malacca and founding Batavia as the centre point of their Asian affairs.

The first Dutch fleet to reach the Moluccas, under the command of Jacob van Heemskerk, dropped anchor off Hitu on 3 March 1599. The Vizier of the Sultan of Ternate, the ancient Kapitan Hitu Tepil, was under direct threat from the Portuguese and therefore welcomed van Heemskerk enthusiastically, but it was the next fleet in 1600 under Steven van der Hagen - Istewen Warhage the Hituese called him - that made the link that led to close co-operation. The Hituese asked him for assistance against the Portuguese at Leitimor, and although the admiral had only one single ship available, he

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[10] Francis Xavier, the great missionary of Asia, who worked for a year in Ambon, later reported that their knowledge was restricted to the conjugation of the verb "rapio" - to steal - in which they showed an "amazing capacity for inventing new tenses and participles" in his letter to Father Rodrigues dated 27th January, 1545. Quoted by B.H.M.Vlekke "Nusantara, A History of Indonesia", The Hague (1965). p. 96.

fell in with their request and for eight weeks tried to dislodge the Portuguese from their fort. The hoped for result was not achieved, but the friendship of the Hituese had been won with this proof that the emnity between the Dutch and the Portuguese was real. This led to a Dutch-Hituese treaty in which it was agreed to fight, as allies, the mutual Portuguese enemy. To facilitate this a fort was built and twenty seven volunteers remained behind. For their part, the Hituese agreed that all spices were to be sold to the Dutch at prices to be fixed later.

But now the Portuguese staged a final all-out effort to regain their authority in the Moluccas with a fleet of eleven ships and 2700 men under the command of Andrew Furtado de Mendoza, which sailed into Ambon Bay on 10 February 1602. The Dutch garrison of the Fort at Hitu had been taken off in time and the fort itself was razed to the ground. Furtado's strength was now spent, his men refused to continue fighting and he was forced to retreat. His violent action, however, had driven all the enemies of the Portuguese together.

A delegation of three young Hituese from the traditional ruling families were secretly sent to Banten, to remind the Dutch of their earlier promises. Furtado had driven the Ambonese into the arms of the Dutch. For the South Moluccas this was the start of an era that was to last for three and a half centuries[11].

On 21 February 1605 the Dutch fleet arrived off Hitu. Kapitan Hitu, whose son was one of the three delegates, immediately added twenty Kora-koras to Van der Hagen's fleet

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[11] H.J.de Graaf, De Geschiedenis van Ambon en de Zuid Molukken. (1977) pp. 43-44.

and the sight of this armada was enough for the Portuguese who hoisted the white flag and with guarantees of safe conduct, they handed over their fort[12].

With the gradual decline of Portuguese power, Christianity had also declined in the Moluccas, but when the Company took over there were still 16,000 Christians in the islands, mainly in Leitimor, Saparua and South Ceram. Initially the Christian Ambonese and the "Moradores" (Portuguese, often of mixed race, who had wished to stay behind in the Moluccas) were allowed to practise their catholic religion, but this was not to last long. Despite promises made by Van der Hagen, sailors set out on an iconoclastic orgy, smashing all "papist" statues; all Portuguese, including the priests, were now expelled from the Moluccas, given an old boat and left to make their way, as best they could, to the Philippines, the nearest Spanish territory.

The Christian Moluccans were at first hostile to the Dutch, but when the hoped for return of the Portuguese did not eventuate, they gradually transferred their loyalty from the king of Portugal to the States General of the Netherlands and the Prince of Orange. This transfer of loyalty had also religious consequences as it brought with it a change from Catholicism to Reformed Protestantism. After the departure of the mission fathers there was no option - if the islands were to remain Christian - but to accept not only the new rulers but also their reformed religion. The Portuguese, it should be remembered, had not differentiated between church and state. Without this State-Church linkage it would probably have been much more difficult to win the Ambonese

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[12] Vlekke op. cit. p.118.

over to the Reformed Protestant V.O.C.

The Muslims or "Moors" had a hard time in the early days of Dutch settlement in Ambon. To be sure, Steven van der Hagen had made common cause with the Hitu Muslims under their famed "Kapitan Hitu" and with their help had ousted the Portuguese in 1605, but thereafter they were unwanted and left to bewail the fact that the Dutch were more formidable foes than the Portuguese had ever been. The hatred of Muslims in general is obvious from a letter from the Governor General in Council to the Governor of Banda, dated 21 November 1625:[13] "We strongly recommend the extirpation of the accursed Moorish sect; no public or private Moorish religious services are to be allowed and in particular no Moorish papists (sic) are to be allowed in the land." After 1605 the Muslims were either treated as slaves or enemies, and it was not until many years later, when most of the Ambonese had been christianised, that the fear of Muslim influence lessened and they were accorded milder treatment. After that the governors generally considered them reliable subjects, even though they did not belong to the ultra-loyalists such as the inhabitants of Leitimor who, after all, were joined to the Gentlemen of the Company by bonds of religion.

It was not difficult to understand why the Hituese Muslims should look for wider bonds which would replace the lost Uli ties; for these they looked to Islam. The notion of being part of the world-wide Muslim community had more appeal than the knowledge that they were subjects of the Company which they had resisted so fiercely and so long. This is why the feeling of affinity with the Muslim sultanate of Ternate

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[13] De Graaf op. cit. p.102.

remained, in spite of more lenient treatment by the Dutch, and why they still saw the Sultan, weak as he was, as their own King. This attitude persisted until well into the nineteenth century; it was to be important in 1810, when the British took over the government of the Moluccas, and again in 1817 when as we shall see, it was the Hituese Muslims who rose en bloc to support the Pattimura revolt, while the Christians of Leitimor remained loyal to the Dutch.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the numbers of Muslims in the area increased steadily, principally through immigration of free Muslims from Macassar and Ternate[14]. Doubtless the newcomers were made aware of the grievances of the earlier Muslim inhabitants.

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Apart from the descendants of the Ternatese Christian immigrants, the half caste children of Portuguese men and native women, as well as emancipated christian slaves were counted as orang Merdika and by the time the Dutch replaced the Portuguese as masters of Ambon (1605) there was already a fairly large class of "free black folks" or mardikers.

Appreciating the usefulness of this category of inhabitants who were favourably disposed towards the westerners, the Dutch upheld the privileges granted by their predecessors and when sometime later a corps of armed townsfolk was formed, the Mardikers were recruited on the

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[14] This extra link with Macassar, the main centre of the smuggling trade, led to more "illegal spice trading" and thus helped to keep government and Muslims in two camps.

same basis as their white fellow townsfolk, in a company under a captain of their own kind. It is from these Mardikers or Mixtice Borgers that the Ambonese Burgers are descended[15].

The children of masters and slave women, together with emancipated Muslim slaves, formed a new category of inhabitants, the "Moorish Burgers". In the eighteenth century these were also admitted to the Companies of Christian Burgers. In a "Provisional Instruction" of 1803 there is mention of "the joint companies of Christian and Moorish Burgers"[16]. They remained, however, under their own officers.

The rights and duties of Burgers and Negory folks (Negory = Village) differed considerably, especially when the plantation and other compulsory labour duties were still demanded from the latter.

The Burgers did not have to perform compulsory labour. They were entitled to wear european clothes and a hat[17]. They were enlisted in the "Schutterij" companies of the militia, and those who lived too far away from Ambon to do active service became contributory members who had to give a yearly sum for the upkeep of the companies. Instead of having to perform plantation services all Burgers paid an individual tax. Many plied a trade, had small businesses or aspired to government posts as village chiefs or Regents and they had their own Ambonese Burger School.

Whilst enjoying these privileges they did not share

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[15] de Bruyn Kops. op.cit. p.6.

[16] ibid. p.9. The situation of the Burgers may be fruitfully compared, of course, with that of the Burgers in those parts of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) which also underwent Portuguese and Dutch conquest.

[17] Since Roman times a hat symbolised freedom.

the rights the negory people had. As mentioned above, they could not claim a share in the sago forests or the use of the waste lands of the village community.

The "monopoly" system, from which sprang many of the political, social and economic problems of the Moluccas, warrants a closer scrutiny.

It can be asserted with some justice, that it had its origins in pre-Europeans times. Then, the "nobles", besides holding a considerable portion of the clove forests, also virtually monopolized the sale of the cloves to foreigners. (Before the Europeans mostly Javanese.) Most sales went through the hands of the "nobility"[18]. All that the Portuguese attempted to do was to put themselves in the place of the "nobility" as the top rung in the economic ladder. Indeed it could be argued that the Portuguese, the Dutch, and (for a while) the English all continued a centuries old system in which the leading characters were replaced, without the system itself being subject to change. The biblical word seemed to come true "there is nothing new under the sun".

But the Portuguese never really managed to enforce their monopoly. The Dutch were different. The maintenance of the spice monopoly - the exclusive right to cultivate as well as trade in the spices of the Moluccas was a political-economic dogma from which the Company would not deviate, even in trivial matters, as the following example will indicate. In 1670 the future Governor General Speelman had planted a dozen clove trees from the Moluccas in his garden in Batavia, just for the fun of it. When the High Government came to hear of it, the harmless trees had to be destroyed[19].

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[18] J.C. van Leur, Indonesian Trade and Society. p.142.

[19] Olivier. op.cit. Vol. III p.179.

The Company grafted its economic exploitative system onto the dati system in the Ambon islands. On the strength of the jus belli it assumed the sovereign right of ownership in respect of all the land of the Ambon Islands. It turned the dati into tributary units, whose tribute consisted in making available the land appointed by the V.O.C. for the cultivation of cloves, in tending the clove plantations and in delivering the produce at a fixed (low) price. To ensure that the plantations were properly tended, the freedom of movement was curtailed; each villager was compelled to remain within the boundaries of the village and to work in his dusun dati on the cultivation of the clove crop. The producer was not able to sell his produce freely to the highest bidder.

To safeguard their monopoly on the world markets the Company proceeded to extirpate all clove trees outside Amboina and the Uliasan islands, using hongi expeditions for this purpose. This situation continued until 1864, when the Minister for the Colonies Fransen van de Putte abolished the monopoly[20]. Something must be said about the somewhat infamous Hongi expeditions and the system of production with which they were associated. Olivier[21] describes these expeditions as inspection tours made by a large fleet of Kora-koras[22] their object was not only to destroy forbidden or unwanted plantations but (and this is less well known) to concern themselves with matters of justice and government. W.B.Martin, the British Resident from 1811 to 1817 had this

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[20] Kroeskamp (1947) p.52.

[21] J.Olivier Jzn. Land en Zeetogten in Nederland's Indie. Vol. I (1830) p.136.

[22] Large vessels requiring many rowers.

to say about them: "while the Hongi was originally introduced with the benevolent view of listening to complaints and redressing grievances and, by periodic visits, to curb the tendencies of subordinate Residents to abuse power, it soon perverted from the beneficent ends of its establishment and became an instrument of governors for extending their deprecations and multiplying the abuses."[23]

Yet it must be said that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries no serious objection to the "guided" clove economy seems to have become manifest. This was basically because the islanders had known no other system; provided there was no interference with the so-called "Tatanamans" there was little resentment against the V.O.C. monopoly. The tatanamans were clove trees planted in the house gardens whenever a child was born. The link between the well being of a tree and the welfare of a person is woven into Ambon's folklore and in 1775 the South Moluccas counted 22 310 of such tatanamans, to which no axe could be applied. This, it has been claimed, is proof that the compulsory clove culture was part of Ambonese culture[24]. It had become the only cash crop, and such dissatisfaction as there was was with the erratic way the government regulated it. Depending on the current demand, delivery quotas were increased or superfluous trees cut down. As we shall see later, even Matulesia took a strong stand in favour of the clove culture, when it was suggested to him, during the revolution, that all clove trees should be destroyed.

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[23] W.B.Martin Letter to Bengal dated 29 February, 1812. Bengal Proceedings p.167/40 India Office Library and Records, London. (Henceforth I.O.L. & R.)

[24] De Graaf (1977) op.cit. p.191.

While the native people gained by the clove culture, in that it gave them a regular income, so did the Company officials fare very well indeed by it and corruption flourished, despite efforts by some of the well meaning Governors General such as Van Imhoff (1743-1750), who tried to curb it by dismissing offending dignitaries. Merely changing personnel, however, was no cure for the problem. It is also a fairly safe guess that the Orang Kayas[25], who were charged with the collection of the clove harvest and the payments to the growers, knew how to feather their own nests. As far as the negory or village people were concerned, the Company rule had the effect of tying the villagers to the land. This restricted their movement, but it must be born in mind that on small islands, such as those in the Uliasan group, there would have been very little demographic mobility in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in any case. On the other hand, Company rule reinforced the villagers' right to a share in the communal lands and prevented unlawful acquisition of neighbouring villages' dusun dati.

The negory or village people were virtually serfs on their own land. They had to provide compulsory services which were divided in paid and unpaid services. In the first category were the services rendered in government stores where the cloves and nutmegs were dried, limed and stored; in the counting house and civil and military building departments; the loading and unloading of government cargoes and rice; providing transport for traveling government officials, officers of the armed forces and other military personnel in

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[25] See below, p.24.

kora-koras or palanquins; the collection and transport of government moneys and goods to and from Ambon; the supply of timber and building materials for public works, both in Ambon and the outer islands and the carrying of mail to and from Saparua, Haruku and Hitu. The unpaid services comprised the building and upkeep of the regents' and schoolmasters' houses, the building of the village orembaais - a smaller type of kora-kora - and other communal craft and the building and maintenance of roads and bridges. On top of this each family had to tend ninety clove trees and provide free transport to the plantations for inspectors. It has been estimated[26] that the villagers had to render annually two months of unpaid and four months of paid services, leaving them six months in which they were free from forced labour.

Since clove and nutmeg plantations had been destroyed in all but Ambon and the Uliasan islands and the Banda group, the Company's interest in the other islands was confined to protecting the continuation of its monopoly position.

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The Ulilima of Hitu, also known as the Ulihitu, were in frequent conflict with the V.O.C., especially after Kaliali, the Vizier of the Sultan of Ternate, was imprisoned in 1634, and a number of wars were fought between them. The main reason for these wars was disagreement over the cloves monopoly embodied in the various contracts concluded over the years. The inhabitants of Hoamoal and Hitu did not always adhere to these contracts because the V.O.C. interpreted the

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[26] Kroeskamp op.cit. p.52.

monopoly of sale to include a monopoly of price-fixing, while other merchants, English as well as Malay and Minangkabau, were prepared to pay much higher prices. This led to clandestine trading and harsher attitudes from the V.O.C., including the destruction of the "illegal" clove trees.

To break the resistance of the Uli Hitu the V.O.C. took far reaching measures. The Ulis were abolished and by order of Governor van Diemen, dated 25 April 1644[27] each village or negory in the Ambon islands had to govern itself. He sent a letter to the Sultan of Ternate which stated that "in future no Kapitan Hitu nor Heads of Ulis (who have forfeited their rights and authority through their rebellion and weapons) will be named or appointed, but in their place each negory will be ruled by its own Head, and the Dutch Governor shall rule over them all".

From that date each village in Ambon has been, as it were, a small independent republic. There was no longer a higher traditional Ambonese administrative body ruling over these village republics. They were mutually independent and only European administrators exercised a co-ordinating function. The village was divided in two or more Soas or neighbourhoods, each having a name and a kepala soa or Head of a neighbourhood, who had to be native-born. Each village also had the so-called Tua Agama, leaders of the religious community and the school. The Kepala Soas and the Tua Agamas elected the Regent who bore the title of Raja, Orang Kaya or Pattie and was usually, but not necessarily, from the traditionally or adat ruling families. These Regents and Kepala Soas were village heads, not government officials and

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[27] Rijks Archief, The Hague. Archive No. 1058 f.158. Quoted by Dr Manusama.

their remuneration amounted to a levy of four percent on all payments for clove supplies, while Regents were also entitled to certain unpaid personal services, especially in the fields or in their household, to be performed by villagers in turn. But the power of the Regents was not unlimited, a degree of concensus was the norm in the village.

In the Moluccas, as elsewhere in the Indies, shrewd political use was made of the ancient influence of the Regents. Heredity, without being consolidated by law, became the custom already during his lifetime, as a reward for zeal and faithful service, the Regent received the promise that he would be succeeded by his son. It would require a very important reason to depart from this rule and where it should be the case the successor would, nevertheless, usually be chosen from the members of the same family. In Java the Regent, who spoke for many thousands was, even in the eyes of the government, a much more important person than the European official, whose discontent would occasion no apprehension; it was not difficult to replace the official but a disgruntled Regent might become the germ of disturbance or rebellion. Van Diemen's action in 1644 had reduced Moluccan Regents to the status of mere village heads and as a result they were less important, but Residents were still eager to keep the Regents on their side.

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The final subject to be looked at in this chapter is the development of the school system, especially since the schoolmasters became highly influential figures in Ambonese society.

The credit for having introduced school education in East Indonesia must go to the Portuguese and Spanish missionaries. In 1538 the Portuguese military commander at the garrison centre of Ternate founded a school there which was later taken over by the Jesuit Fathers[28]. It was a simple school where a priest gave religious instruction and in addition taught his pupils to read and write and perhaps some arithmetic.

The school must have played an important part in the work of the steadily progressing christianisation, but the whole of the missionary activity was inseparably bound up with, and dependent on, the colonial power. The kings of Spain and Portugal had been granted the right of patronage in the overseas territories by the Pope. In return they had to provide for the missionaries and the maintenance of the institutions. There was great similarity between this system and that of the later V.O.C. system, in which the clergymen were simply servants of the trading company and the Company exercised supreme control over the school system. Hence, here also, church and school were used to support the colonial policy. Apart from their religious function, the schools undoubtedly also served to tie the people of the Moluccas more closely to the Company. The education policy represented a mingling of religious intentions and politico-economic considerations. One of the essential points of the education policy was the right to prescribe the school language. The Company in 1607, when its first school was founded in Ambon, laid down that Dutch would be the school language. The underlying idea of this language policy was that teaching the

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[28] Kroeskamp (1947) pp. 8-15.

Dutch language was an effective means of raising and strengthening feelings of loyalty toward the Company. The "General Church Order" of 1643 and the "School Regulation" of 1684 contained the provision that the Dutch language was to be spoken exclusively at the schools. The School Regulation of 1778 still enshrined this provision and it applied to the children of free men and slaves alike. In practice this language regulation soon became a dead letter. Whereas in Ambon town, under the very eye of the high government officials, the Dutch language was maintained in the best possible way for quite a long time, the schools beyond the immediate field of vision of the officials soon switched to Malay and the government found itself compelled to accept Malay as the school language in the Moluccas. The schoolmasters usually combined two functions, teaching at the school and, in the absence of ordained ministers, the function of pastor of the parish. Practically none of these schoolmasters had ever received professional training for this dual responsibility. Anyone who had been to school was in effect a potential teacher. Occasionally a teacher selected by the minister received a certain amount of additional training at the minister's house, which consisted of learning to sing psalms, religious instruction and some reading. There was no question of pedagogic or didactic training and the education amounted to little more than a poor preparation for giving religious instruction. The conclusion to be drawn must undoubtedly be that schools were staffed with personnel poorly equipped for their task and that therefore this school system could hardly be expected to make any contribution towards promoting the well-being of the community. However,

it should be viewed against the seventeenth and eighteenth century background, when ideas about education differed enormously from those we have today. If it were compared with popular education in the Republic of the United Netherlands of those days (a country which could certainly not be called backward in this respect), the education given to the Christian population of the East Indies could be said to be neither very different nor greatly inferior[29].

In the latter days of the East India Company the administration of the school system gradually began to slacken. The number of ordained ministers dropped to such a low number that it became absolutely impossible to provide the necessary guidance to communities and schools. The frequency of the visiting tours of the ministers also dropped and in the end had to be discontinued altogether. By the end of the British interregnum the top layer of the administrative body of church and school had disappeared and only the schoolmasters remained at their posts, without any support whatsoever. Now, in effect, the schoolmasters were the actual religious leaders of the Moluccan Christians. This does not imply that everything in the Christian communities remained as it was before. Once the visiting tours were discontinued, parish life languished. Because the celebration of baptisms, Holy Communion and marriage services, which had been the exclusive prerogative of the ministers, no longer took place and what could be taken to be a relapse to earlier religious forms began to intrude upon the islanders' Christianity[30]. Yet a complete reversion to earlier forms was virtually

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[29] Kroeskamp op.cit. pp. 8-15.

[30] See Enklaar pp. 39 and 67.

impossible; the islanders had been closely associated with Christianity for too long.

The schoolmasters' influence came second only to that of the village Headmen, and, as long as they were paid by the government, they were completely independent of the village community. When, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Dutch government took over the administration from the V.O.C. and Daendels, forced through lack of finance, made the payment of schoolmasters' salaries the responsibility of the villages, with a consequent loss of their prestige, they alienated a group of people who could have been their most powerful allies in the troubles to come.

CHAPTER II [1]

THE BRITISH INTERREGNUMS

In the second half of the eighteenth century the importance of the spice trade was waning on a world wide basis. The Company - the raison d'être of which was the spice trade - went into a decline which foreshadowed its demise. Corruption, about which more will be said later in this chapter, contributed heavily to its fall, but the trade itself was seriously affected by changing European tastes and eating habits. Under the influence of the more sophisticated French cuisine there was a switch from the heavily spiced meat meals of the past to much more delicate dishes, causing a decrease in the European demand for oriental spices. Added to this was the most important cause of all, the loss of the monopoly of production combined with transportation difficulties due to the Anglo-French-American wars towards the end of the eighteenth century. Despite the extirpation of clandestine trees on neighbouring islands and the unwanted ones in the Uliasan Islands themselves, the

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[1] To make the events in this chapter easier to follow a short chronology is given:

1784 Peace of Paris. British acquire rights of free navigation in the Moluccas.
1795 France occupies Holland.
15 September Holland at war with Britain.
1796 Rainier Expedition occupies the Moluccas.
1796-1803 First British occupation of the Moluccas.
1799 V.O.C. folds - this is irrelevant in the Indies until 1803.
1802 Peace of Amiens, Moluccas to be returned to the Netherlands.
1803-1810 Moluccas again under Dutch Rule.
Daendels' period.
1810-1817 Second British interregnum of the Moluccas.
Martin's period.

situation became untenable in the end. In an effort to obstruct further inroads made by foreign traders after 1770, the supplying of firewood and water to European ships was officially prohibited, but still the number of interlopers in the Moluccas increased. In 1769-1770 a French expedition under Pierre Poivre - the father of the spice culture in the French colonies - entered the Moluccas and acquired clove tree seedlings. A protest was lodged by the Company, but by now its standing was such that its complaints went unheeded. The order to refuse assistance and stores to European foreigners was stressed once again, but even this was no longer effective. Cloves had now been planted at Île de France and Réunion in 1770 and three years later at Cayenne and the French Caribbean islands.

After the Peace of Paris (1784) the British were granted the right to cruise anywhere in the archipelago; but this, in effect, was only the legalisation of an already existing situation.

When, in January 1795, the French occupied Holland the Stadhouder William V went into exile in England, where his cousin King George II made Kew palace available to him. The British Foreign Minister Grenville persuaded William to sign a number of letters on 7 February 1795, in which the governors of Dutch colonies were ordered "to admit troops and ships directed hence by his Britannic Majesty and to consider them troops and ships of a friendly nation sent to prevent their invasion by French troops". This action was, arguably, in line with the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1788, which, in case of war, allowed the ally to occupy the colonies of the other and so keep it out of the hands of a common enemy. Fearing

that the colonies would soon come under the influence and possibly the rule of French republicans who had already entered Holland, the ex-stadhouder preferred the protection of England. Britain purported to safeguard the colonies until the Prince of Orange was restored to his rightful position. Whether they intended to keep their promise is difficult to judge, but William obviously believed them[2].

Walter Lennon, in his Journal of Admiral Rainier's expedition against the Moluccans[3] raises doubts about British intentions at this time when he repeatedly hints broadly at the possibility of the Dutch possessions being retained by Britain. For example, he speaks of:

> "... suggestions relative to their future better management in case of (their) being retained in our permanent possession..." (p.253)
> "... Should this remain eventually in our possession, which is not unlikely..." (p.264)
> "... whatever may be the decision repsecting these islands, whether it may be judged consistent with the interests of Great Britain, to keep permanent possession of them or restore them back to the Dutch..." (p.358)
> "On this account therefore it may be presumed that it would be not only to dispossess the Dutch of those islands but to restore them free to the native princes; in doing which the obligation conferred on them would readily induce them to enter into such terms, as would secure to the British the whole advantage of their trade without expense." (p.359)

It is of course true that Captain Walter Caulfield Lennon was not the British government, but he was also not just anybody. He was principal engineer and secretary to the expedition and his Journal and opinions are addressed to the Directors of the British East India Company which, if the Dutch possessions were retained by Britain, would hope to

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[2] H.T.C.Colenbrander. Gedenkstukken der Algemeene Geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 - 1840. p.179.

[3] "Journal of an Expedition to the Moluccas in 1796, under the Command of Admiral Rainier". Text of this Journal in "Een Engelsche Lezing omtrent de Ver overing van Banda en Ambon in 1796" by P.J.Heeres in Bydragen Vol.60 (1908) passim.

play an important part therein. The question of British intention in this matter is importance since, after 1817, Dutch claims were made, and denied by the British, that the Moluccan population had been influenced to believe that the British were there to stay and, once Dutch reoccupation was imminent that they (the British) would be back very soon afterwards.

Whatever British intentions were in 1795 and later, it has to be recorded that the "Kew letters" in most Dutch colonies led to an acceptance of British protection without any resistance. The Rainier expedition which we have already mentioned sailed in October 1795 from Madras with orders from England to secure the Moluccas; "for the purpose of restoring these Islands to the ancient Government of Holland, if it again should be restored; or, in case of their rejecting the offer of our protection, finally to reduce them by force". Force proved unnecessary since Ambon's Governor Alexander Cornabé, on the strength of the Kew letters, handed town and city over without any resistance when Rainier's flotilla appeared in Ambon Bay on 17 February 1796[4]. Not a shot was fired from the impregnable (in Dutch opinion) walls of Fort Victoria.

The local Ambonese were amazed and shocked at this sudden change of government without any Dutch resistance. The townspeople fled, leaving houses and shops unattended.

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[4] Lennon records that this day was the 173rd anniversary of the infamous "Ambon Massacre" of 1623. He claims magnanimously "not withstanding the recollection of former cruelties exercised on our countrymen, now by the return of the date made fresh in every person's mind, there was now shewn the slightest tendency towards taking vengeance for that event." Lennon's Journal, p.277.

This led to plunder by both Dutch and British troops of private and also of government property, but the British authorities put a quick stop to that. Native troops deserted, taking their arms with them, to the dismay of the British. The European troops, most of whom were Poles or Germans, including a company of Württembergers (part of a regiment of mercenaries supplied by the Duke of Württemberg) had no objection to soldiering under the British flag and took the oath of fealty. Most of the Rajas, Pattis and Orang Kayas did the same thing. Most of the Dutch officials retained their positions; they actually were most essential since very few of the British understood either Dutch or Malay. In the early days of British rule, therefore, government changed but little and the clove monopoly remained in force, even though clove plantations had by now been established outside the archipelago. But prices were increased, a move which the parsimonious Dutch officials could have afforded earlier, as is clear from Daendels' calculations[5].

One group of the population drew its own conclusion from this sudden change of government. The Hituese - never, it will be remembered, as strongly attached to the Company as the Christians of Leitimor - had resigned themselves to the tutelage of the Company. But the idea of the "Kingship" of the Sultan of Ternate about which the Company had never bothered very much, since it kept in the background, was still alive. The Hituese still saw the Sultan as their Rajah, kept from reigning in his full glory only by the power of the Company. It is therefore understandable that, with the sudden disappearance of that power, a "royalist" group

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[5] See p.47.

decided to make itself independent of the British as well. They advanced on to Ambon town but the British had been alerted and put down the uprising without much trouble. A number of rebels, including the new king, were jailed and some were executed[6]. As we shall see in the next chapter the Hituese were to rise once more against an incoming government in 1817.

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During the war from 1785 till 1802 not one Dutch ship had reached Indonesia. The Dutch position at sea was so weak that American ships were used to transport spices to Amsterdam. In 1797 twenty Danish and thirty one American ships called at Java ports for coffee and spices - coffee then already being the more important - totalling 12 million pounds in 1797[7].

After the Peace of Amiens (25 March 1802) the question of the re-organisation of the colonies was made a matter of urgency in Holland. A Commission was appointed to draft a Charter that would "give the Indies the greatest possible welfare, Dutch commerce the greatest benefits and the Dutch government's finances the greatest gain"[8]. The renewed outbreak of war in 1803 was the reason this Charter never reached the Indies.

The Dutch East India Company by this time had ceased

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[6] De Graaf (1977) op.cit. p.198.

[7] Van Houtte op.cit. p.167.

[8] ibid p.166.

to exist. In 1796 the Directors surrendered the administration of the Company to a government committee and its Charter, which expired on 31 December 1799, was not renewed. The state took over all the possessions and debts of the Company and thus, for the sum of 134 million guilders, acquired the whole colonial empire, with all its resources.

Where the Company, as a commercial enterprise had not needed to bother with principles of government - for its sole purpose was commercial profits - the new state, inspired now by the notions of the French Revolution, had to bring the colonial administration in line with the liberal principles now being so loudly proclaimed in the home country. Their enthusiasm, however, did not exceed their business sense. They agreed with Batavia that the doctrines of liberty and equality, however strongly based on the inalienable rights of men, "cannot be transferred, nor applied, to the East Indian possessions of the State, as long as the security of these possessions depends on the existing and necessary state of subordination of the Indonesians and as long as that introduction cannot take place without exposing these possessions to confusion, the effect of which cannot be imagined".[9]

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In 1803 the Moluccas came again under Dutch rule. The Kingdom of Holland was now ruled by Napoleon's brother Louis, who appointed H.Daendels Governor General of the Indies. The latter needed vast amounts of money for the

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[9] B.Vlekke, Nusantara The Hague (1943) p.240.

defence of the colony. The British navy prevented the import of specie from the Netherlands, after war had broken out anew, and after Daendels had upset the American trade, by refusing to honour contracts made[10], he ran desperately short of money. He now fell back on the doubtful device of introducing unsecured paper money, a measure that was to have serious repercussions in the Moluccas.

As a result of the new outbreak of war in 1803, contact with Java had become both difficult and dangerous, so that the Moluccas government had to sell 100 000 pounds of cloves, which would normally have gone to Batavia, to the traders who now could roam freely through the archipelago.

Daendels, wanting to strengthen the army in Java now set into motion a remarkable exchange of manpower; from Ambon he recruited many fit villagers for the Java army, often in a most ruthless way, while in their place second rate individuals and petty criminals from Java were sent to garrison the Moluccas. But there were also well trained European troops there. In 1809 there were 1445 men stationed in Ambon, not counting the Ambon "Burger Schutterij" or Militia. The whole establishment was commanded by Colonel Jean Philippe Filz, a Frenchman by birth who had achieved rapid promotion in the army, rising from Lieutenant in 1793 to Colonel by 1809.

The fortifications of Ambon had been strengthened and the fort had been enlarged several times. Although undoubtedly a strong bastion, it had one great drawback: due

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[10] Stapel F.W. Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indie. Amsterdam (1943) p.218.

to the growth of the town area it had no longer a field of fire, while the town itself was within easy reach of fire from the surrounding hills. This could not have been foreseen when the fort was first built in a time when the range of cannon was much more limited. To make up for this, fortifications had been built on those hills to protect them, and thus the Fort, from an invading enemy.

On 16 February 1810, three British ships, under Commander Tucker, with a landing force of 404 men, arrived in Ambon Bay[11]. Captain Court, one of their officers, having served on Ambon before, knew the situation very well and their first attack was therefore directed at the hill fortifications, which fell to them without much trouble. The British now opened fire on the fort from there, as well as from their ships.

On 18 February Tucker sent an officer with a flag of truce, demanding surrender. Filz, who had plenty of stores and ammunition, refused, but kept the negotiations going. In his subsequent court martial he claimed that the quality of his gunpowder was so poor that the enemy "with their six-pounders reached places which we were scarcely able to shoot at with a 4 lb ball"[12]. Two adjutants, sent to ascertain the position of the front, reported that the British force was greatly superior and, after consultation with Governor Heukevlugt, it was decided that Ambon should capitulate while it was still possible to negotiate favourable conditions. And so, instead of attacking forcefully,

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[11] J.v.Stubenvoll. History of the Island of Celebes and the Trial of Colonel Filz, Vol. IV. (1817) passim.

[12] P.J.Heeres op.cit. p.251.

Filz had the white flag hoisted over the fort. On 19 February the surrender took place. When Filz's troops realised that they outnumbered their conquerors by over a thousand men they were disgusted and wanted to continue the fight, but the British made them change their minds. Tucker's forces took over no fewer than 218 cannon.

The garrison was guaranteed free passage to Java, after surrendering their arms, but a number of officers preferred to remain in the now British territory. Filz could have done the same, but preferred to go back to Java. "I was weak", he stated, "but flight at this stage would make me a coward, guilty of treason".

Daendels was naturally furious and decided to set an example. Filz was court martialled, having to answer no fewer than 240 charges. The sentence was death by the bullet. He died like a gentleman.

It is obvious what impression this surrender made on the Ambonese people; their respect for the Dutch diminished enormously. The last years of Dutch rule had not been propitious for the Ambonese. Although Daendels had tried with all means at his disposal to keep the government of the Moluccas going, British domination of the seas had hampered shipping links seriously so that business deteriorated and pasar prices kept rising. The people had been forced to accept paper money, young men had been pressed into the army and forcibly taken to Java. The building of fortifications had demanded materials and workers on a huge scale. When the British arrived this all ended overnight. The sea routes were reopened, trade revived, cotton textiles became available again at reasonable prices and the retail trade picked up

with well paid British forces spending freely. The new government abolished pasar taxes[13] and replaced them with an opium tax. The clove culture was no longer restricted, the Ambonese could grow as many trees as they liked, as long as they sold their entire crop to the British government.

The second departure of the Dutch from their islands had done nothing to improve the Company's image and when in 1811 it became known that Java too had fallen into British hands, the Dutch seemed to have disappeared over the horizon permanently.

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Ambon, after it was taken on 19 February 1810, was placed not under Raffles at Batavia but under the direct control of the Supreme Government of Bengal, Captain Court was formally vested with the powers of Civil Governor. It was decided, however, at Minto's suggestion, that William Byam Martin should be appointed the regular Resident.

With Martin's appointment there begun an era in the Moluccas during which to some extent in contrast to Java under Raffles, no real attempt was made to transplant the colonial principles of British Bengal to these islands. But Martin, a highly moral and religious man, put his personal stamp very strongly on the more than six year period of his government. This brief period of British rule in the Moluccas is interesting in itself, but it is also of great significance in our story.

Lord Minto, the Governor General of India, had been

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[13] A much disliked market tax.

very impressed by Martin's conduct during the insurrection at Bencoolen when its Resident had been assassinated and Martin had been Secretary there. Martin had received his training for the civil service at the Fort William College in Calcutta, where he had been greatly influenced by William Carey. Carey, with Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall, had initiated a renewal campaign among the Particular Baptists in England, which led to a surge of growth. It was Carey who later formed the English Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, the beginning of the modern foreign missionary movement in the English speaking world, and became its first missionary to India. In 1801 he was appointed Professor of Bengali at the Fort William College where Martin, who came to regard him as a life long fatherly friend, was a student at the time.

The College at Fort William had an educational programme at the time unique in the history of European colonisation. New arrivals from Britain, expecting to be sent immediately into jungle districts of Bengal, found themselves instead in the classroom, where veteran "Orientalists" offered them the means of communicating with India's inhabitants in their own language[14].

Martin and his fellow students had come to believe that England should help Asians rediscover the lost roots of their own civilisation. Inspired by their teachers they argued that Asian civilisations were truly healthy and vigorous in ancient times, but had somehow degenerated. They felt it their duty to renew the various forms of government which they found in Asia, and the Asian Institutions, civil and religious[15]. Asians, they felt, possessed talents which

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[14] D.Kopf. British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance, Los Angeles (1969), p.95.

[15] D.Kopf. op.cit. p.102.

had hitherto lain smothered under the despondency of neglect. They felt, according to one modern scholar, that "the greatest mistake England could make was to ignore the achievements of these Asian civilisations"[16]. But Martin was also a devout christian who, when Resident of the Moluccas, did all in his power to raise the moral standards in the islands by encouraging Christian missionaries. There is a contradiction here, it will be argued later, which led to a conflict between two principles.

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As has already been hinted earlier in this chapter corruption had been riding high in both the British and Dutch East India Companies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and there is little doubt that the failure of the V.O.C. was to a large extent attributable to it. Profits had been enormous and supervision lax. Much of the Company officials' earnings, over and above the (extremely low) salaries paid, came from "private trading" which was condoned by the higher Company officials who themselves were amongst the most guilty. Daendels and Raffles undoubtedly did well out of their sojourns in the

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[16] ibid.

Indies[17].

Captain Court, during his brief period as Civil Governor of the Moluccas, anticipating the need for more ships, purchased the ship "Governor Bruce" from its private owner for $12 000 and sold it three days later to the government for $20 000, a transaction for which he was later tried and dismissed[18].

Martin in a letter to the Governor General in Council, dated 29 February 1812, discussed the matter of corruption at some length, concluding that the example of a governor would be closely followed by his subordinates, leading to an entirely corrupt government. He was unhappy with the system of government introduced by the Dutch, as he explained to Calcutta:

> Each district had a Regent assisted by a Council of elders. They were charged with control and fulfilment of Regulations re Crops, Compulsory Labour, etc.

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[17] Daendels, who was indignant about corruption by civil servants himself did very well out of the Buitenzorg estate. This governor general's estate had traditionally been handed over to each incoming Governor General by his predecessor for a fixed sum of fl. 100 000. Daendels persuaded a docile Raad van Indie (Council of India) to award it to him personally on a hereditary basis. He then sold large tracts (the palace and the park to the government itself) at an estimated profit of one million guilders.

Raffles did well out of a deal with his friend the Resident Hare, who had acquired vast tracts of land from the Sultan of Banjermassin. Finding that the local Dajaks refused to work, he asked Raffles for assistance. Raffles then transported three thousand petty criminals and innocent peasants from Java. Hundreds of them died and the affair became known as the "Banjermassin Enormity". See Van Houtte, Neumeyer et al. Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden. Vol. IX, Amsterdam (1966) pp. 173-177 and F.W.Stapel, Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indie Amsterdam (1943) p.220.

[18] Bengal Proceedings. I.O.L. & R. P.167/40.

> All below the rank of Elder had to perform labour which was demanded by the government and the regents to such an extent that the natives had no time or opportunity to improve their own conditions, transfer their abode to better places or develop peculiar talents. No qualification of genius, age or length of service emancipated them from this labour. As a result of the corrupt administration personal virtues were suppressed, while the evils inseparable from the system were aggravated.
>
> All offices were sold by the governor who pocketed the profits, especially the office of Regent. The cost was always retrieved from the natives. It was frequently purchased at an expense far exceeding its intrinsic value, the reimbursement of which the purchaser expected to derive from the expedients of rapine and extortion[19].

Martin introduced changes gradually. R.Farquhar, Governor of the Moluccas during the first British interregnum from 1796 till 1803, had advised the Governor General of the commercial advantages of the Moluccan spice trade, which, if disposed of in India was estimated to yield an annual profit of 200 000 Pounds and, if sold in England, twice that amount[20]. With that in mind, Martin found it "... not advisable to exonerate the natives from the obligation to furnish the labour required"[21]. But he increased the wages paid from 1 stiver and 1 lb. of rice per diem to 3 stivers and 1 1/3 lbs. of rice daily.

Shortly before Colonel Filz's surrender of the Moluccas, Daendels made the following estimate of the profits of the Moluccan spice crop which was based on a buying price for cloves of 3 Stivers and a selling price of 50 Stivers. Per pound prices for mace and nutmeg were pro rata. The total estimated profit was calculated as follows:

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[19] ibid.

[20] Letter by Minto to East India Company, London, dated 15/12/1810 I.O.L. & R. E/4/78.

[21] Letter by Martin to Bengal, dated 29/2/1812. I.O.L. & R. P/167/40.

Portrait of Thomas Matulesia by Ver Huell

Matulesia now called Pattimura on a recent stamp of the Republic of Indonesia

Buying price total crop of spices	Rd.	68 750	
Cost of troops, ammunition, hospitals	"	200 000	
Civil service salaries	"	91 798	
Maintenance Buildings	"	30 000	
Freight and Cooly wages	"	50 000	
Navy	"	30 000	
Incidentals	"	29 452	
Land rent and Revenues			Rd. 100 000
Total Sale Spice Crop			" 1 716 666
Total estimated Net Profit		" 1 316 666	
		Rd.1 816 666	Rd.1 816 666

This net profit of well over 300 per cent shows clearly that, in spite of the failure of the Dutch monopoly, there was scope for an increase in the price paid to the Moluccans[22].

Martin also wanted to disqualify the infirm and the old from compulsory labour, so that they would be able to "apply themselves with greater diligence to their domestic occupations".

On the shortage of labour Martin reported to Bengal: "Anchorage at Ambon is good, but the lack of labour creates difficulties. Often no more than 300 bags of rice can be discharged in one day. The Dutch extracted a contribution of labour from the villagers round Fort Victoria, paying so little that it did not cover the labourers most urgent wants"[23].

Martin found it necessary not only to continue demanding contributions of labour from the local people; but

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[22] Daendels, Staat der Nederlandsch Oost Indische Bezittingen. The Hague (1814) pp. 71-72.

[23] Martin to Gov.Gen. in Council 25 May 1811. I.O.L. & R. E/4/376.

also to divert workers from other jobs to work at the anchorage. But, in his usual fashion, he increased their wages. In an effort to lighten the burden of the local people he made an attempt to persuade the Government to send convict labour to the Moluccas. In this he was unsuccessful; the Governor General was unwilling to do so in consequence of the uncertainty existing in respect of the return of the Islands to the Dutch. In that case the convicts would have to be removed at great expense "since they could not, with any kind of propriety be left, in the conditions of slaves, in the hands of a Foreign Power"[24]. We may note in passing that although mail from England took many months to reach India, by 1814 the Calcutta government appears to have been aware of the fact that there was little likelihood of a permanent British occupation of the Moluccas.

Martin, although imbued with the spirit of Wilberforce, could not see his way clear to free the slaves. He explained in a letter to Bengal that because of the smallness of the population the emancipation of slaves employed in the spice plantations would be premature until they had arrived at a greater state of civilisation. Christianity, he reported, was gaining ground and the inhabitants were keen on instruction. To make that and the establishment of schools and the system of education more efficient, he suggested that some missionaries at Serampore be invited to come to Ambon and take up the management and the supervision and instruct pupils in the principles of Christianity[25].

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[24] Bengal Civil/Colonial. I.O.L. & R. 167/57 12 February 1812.

[25] Martin's Letter to Bengal Govt. dated 18 August 1813. I.O.L. & R. 167/56.

Martin worked particularly hard to resurrect the Moluccan church and promote "popular enlightenment"; hence his request for missionaries from Bengal. In his endeavours to obtain bibles he was greatly assisted by Raffles, who in response to a government promise of money for their purchase, wrote to Calcutta, pointing out that in Java, unlike Ambon, there was no numerous class of native Christians. "In Ambon there are Christians for whom schools are provided by the government and consequently an Edition (of the Bible) in Arabic type will be the most valuable gift that could be dispersed ... We trust that the sum which the Supreme Government has so graciously promised to contribute ... may be applied entirely in support of (this plan)"[26].

Martin wanted to start a "Central School" in Ambon, but he lacked properly qualified teachers. He urged the Calcutta government to acquire some "missionary hearted educationalists" from Serampore. He also wrote to William Carey for his help. "I earnestly beg of you to concert means for sending a missionary to Amboyna. The advantages would be incalculable. As the Head of Administration here I would consider it a sacred duty to give all the assistance in my power"[27]. In reply William Carey offered his son Jabez. In January 1814 Jabez Carey received his appointment and free passage from the Bengal government and within the span of three days got married, was ordained and sailed for Ambon. He took on the superintendency of the schools, made inspection tours of the islands, preached for the garrison,

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[26] Raffles to Secretary Calcutta Bible Society 18 September 1813. I.O.L. & R. 167/57.

[27] S.Pearce Carey, William Carey. London (1923) pp. 301-307.

was appointed State Almoner and a member of the Court of Justice[28]. As Superintendent of Schools Carey favoured the Lancaster system in which children teach children. Great numbers of children were gathered in a room, seated in rows usually of ten pupils each. An adult master taught the monitors and each monitor taught his row of pupils the lessons in reading or writing. The defect of this system arose, not from the principle that children can or should learn from each other - they do anyhow - but from the elaboration and distortion of it. To achieve mass results and mass economies the adult teacher was relegated to the position of bystander, learning was based on drill[29]. This did not fit the overall teacher image of the Moluccas. The Moluccan schoolmaster-pastor was an authoritative figure in every aspect and any delegation of this authority was fiercely resented.

In his reports, Martin refers to the "fine service" of Carey. De Graaf asserts that his work influenced the internal religious life of the Ambonese[30]. For too long each schoolmaster had had to rely on his own intuition and initiative and it was Jabez's efforts that gave more form to the Moluccan Christian Church as an entity. In time differences arose on points of tradition and dogma, as we will see later in this chapter, but there is no doubt that the first groundwork in re-establishing the Church, which had drifted for a long period, was done by Jabez Carey.

Both Martin and Carey regretted the fact that no other

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[28] ibid.

[29] Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 13 (1971).

[30] De Graaf, op.cit. p.206.

missionaries came from Bengal, and put the blame for this restriction on the British Administration in India, which "was reluctantly passing out of fierce hostility to Christian Missions into confessed indebtedness"[31]. Prior to 1807 the opinion of the British East India Company had been that "if it were practicable to convert Hindus to Christianity, it was not desirable"[32]. But further help arrived in the Moluccas in 1815, in the person of Joseph Kam, one of the first missionaries sent out by the Netherlands Missionary Society, which had been established in 1797. His arrival was welcomed by Martin and the Ambonese Christian community, which had not had a regular minister of the Reformed faith since 1794. Thousands of children had not been baptized and no Communion Service had been held for more than twenty years. That the church still functioned in some way was entirely due to the schoolmaster-pastors and the strength of the church adat.

Kam had not become a missionary until his middle forties, when he had joined the Netherlands Missionary Society. As there were as yet no missionary colleges in the Netherlands, he was trained in theology by a number of ministers. When he had finished his training in 1811, the war with England and the French Continental System barred the sea-routes, but in 1812 he had reached England via Sweden. At first he was distrusted (he might have been a spy) but in the end he was received very well and given some missionary training at a theological college at Gosport.

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[31] Pearce Carey, op.cit. p.306.

[32] From a speech by Wilberforce, putting the case for free admission for missionaries into the Company's territories. Source: P.J.Marshall. Problems of Empire: Britain and India 1757 - 1813. London (1968) p.187.

Here he also learned the English language, a useful acquisition at a time when the Dutch colonies were administered by Britain. Finally, on 8 March 1815, he arrived in Ambon, about a year after Jabez Carey's arrival.

Jabez was a true Baptist who did not believe in child baptism, something about which, on the other hand, the Ambonese were very enthusiastic. Kam went to work with great enthusiasm to put this matter right. Three thousand children were waiting to be baptized and Kam, baptizing 120 each week, caught up with the backlog in half a year. As he also baptized a great many christians on the other islands, he acquired the nickname "Tukang Sacramen" - Sacrament Merchant. Kam certainly was generous with the baptismal water, but he saw it as the only way to keep his enormous flock together by an outward sign. Beside his busy minister's duties Kam found time to set up a printing shop. Many negories had had to make do for years with just a few pages of the Bible, from which the schoolmaster would read on Sundays. Bibles, hymn books and catechisms soon came off his press. He was musical, too, and, where there was no organ available, he would start the flute orchestras that still enliven Ambonese church services today. There is no doubt then, that the Ambonese Christian society underwent a distinct revival in the years immediately after Kam's arrival. Carey, however, was a complicating factor in the situation.

Carey's work in Ambon has been discussed by several writers[33] but little mention has been made of the relationship between Carey and Kam. An insight into this comes through

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[33] e.g. E.Payne, South East of Serampore and Pearce Carey, William Carey.

clearly in the correspondence of Kam with the London Missionary Society, quoted by Enklaar[34]. While Kam made no mention of Jabez Carey in his letters to the Netherlands Missionary Society, he did so, on several occasions, in those to the London Missionary Society - at first in neutral or praising words but later in a complaining and critical fashion. In June 1815 Kam, writing to the London Missionary Society, noted that the students (of the Ambon Central School) were "well attended" by "Mr Kerry" who had been complimented by Resident Martin on "satisfactory proof of progress". The Resident had promised continued support for the provision of "the inestimable benefits of learning, civilisation and religion"[35].

Kam took the view that, especially in the Moluccas, the superintendency and authority over the schoolmasters, who were also parish pastors, should not be vested in a neutral government school system, but in the minister. Of course in matters of religion Jabez was far from neutral, and here was Kam's second and most weighty objection. Carey, as a true son of his father, "gave free rein to the dogmas of anabaptism"[36]. William Carey had urged his son to revise catechisms and schoolbooks in Ambon and thus introduce "sound doctrine and genuine piety"[37]. As soon as he had sufficient command of the language (Malay) he should immediately attack child baptism and sprinkling with water

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[34] Enklaar op.cit. pp. 44-47.

[35] Enklaar, op.cit. pp. 44-47. All quotations of the L.M.S. correspondence with Kam are taken from this source.

[36] Van Doren, op.cit. p.156.

[37] Payne, op.cit. pp. 85-88 (Quoted by Enklaar p.47).

and prove to them, with the scriptures, "what is the right mode of baptism and who are the proper persons to be baptised. Let nothing short of a radical change of heart satisfy you in your converts"[38].

No doubt Kam concurred with the need for a true conversion, but as a Calvinist minister he could not accept Carey's methods. Although Kam does not mention the name of William Carey and therefore does not indicate any appreciation of the latter's special place and work in the rejuvenation of the world missionary movement, he must have corresponded with him, probably specifically over his objections to Jabez's attitudes, because William Carey wrote to his son in 1817, "I received a letter from Mr Kam. I am afraid his ideas of the nature of conversion and Christianity are very defective and confused. I hope you keep on good terms with him, but you must carry on a work entirely separate from him, if you ever hope to be useful"[39].

Basically, the new interest in their church by the British administration was well received by the schoolmasters and their congregations in 1811. The funding of schoolmasters' salaries and church expenses was seen as the most important renovation brought about by the British. Jabez's arrival three years later had been equally welcomed and if his refusal to baptize their children had offended, his efforts to provide books, and especially Bibles, were greatly appreciated. Once Kam was present and only too willing to baptize their children, the religious life was tranquil for the duration of British rule. The widespread religious

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[38] Pearce Carey, op.cit. p.327.

[39] Enklaar, op.cit. p.47.

revival in some cases led to excesses. Whether it was Martin's fervour for religion and morals, or the ministrations of Carey and later Kam, that encouraged these excesses is difficult to determine, but a section of Moluccan Christians began to consider their religious life as of sole importance. Neglecting their normal daily obligations, they held daily devotional meetings where the Bible was read and psalms sung all day long.

Given this background, one is tempted to look for signs of "millennialism" or Messianic influences in the revolt that followed. Millenarianism often appeals to the socially deprived and the doctrine of the millenium and the Second Advent implies an overturning of the world as at present constituted[40]. One is tempted, indeed, to make comparisons with movements such as Hau-Hau and Pai Marire in New Zealand. Yet, it must be emphasized again, the Ambonese were not a recently Christianised group, like the nineteenth century Maoris. Their Christianity was the orthodoxy of the Calvinist church, with which they had been in contact for two hundred years. The author has found nothing which would indicate any millennialist or prophetic tendencies.

The special favours the schoolmasters enjoyed did not go unnoticed. While Daendels, through lack of fund had made the schoolmasters' salaries the responsibility of the negories, Martin paid them out of the government coffers. This made them independent of the negories and thus strengthened their authority. Martin saw the schoolmasters as the "natural propagators of the enlightenment of heart and intellect". This was at first an attitude shared to some

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[40] See Lanternari, The Religions of the Oppressed.

extent by the incoming Dutch Administration, whose Commissioners, in 1817, for one brief moment, considered the possibility of running the government with the schoolmasters rather than the old Regent class, because of their influence with the people. The idea was soon dropped[41].

As the importance of the schoolmasters had increased, so had the authority of the Orang Kayas, Patis and Rajahs diminished. Although the British had decided against changes in the old rule of government, they were much stricter in the supervision of the village officials. Whereas the Dutch had generally been considerate towards the old ruling families and had left them practically alone, so long as they produced enough cloves for the Government warehouses, the British had punished these traditional adat heads very severely for even minor abuses of power or corruption. This did nothing to improve their authority while that of the schoolmasters, on the other hand, increased. This change in authority may well have been the deciding factor in the ill-fated events which took place shortly after the return of the Dutch Government. Martin, albeit from the most idealistic motives, had upset centuries old social relationships.

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One further point to be considered in the military aspect of British rule in the Moluccas. As a result of the taking of Java by Lord Minto, the threat to the safety of the Moluccas had diminished and as a consequence Raffles and

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[41] De Graaf 1977 op.cit. p.207.

Martin had been asked for a joint report on the military requirements for both Java and Amboyna[42]. Martin's suggestion was the replacement of Indian Sepoys by an Ambonese Corps, founded on comparison with what he called the Provincial Battalion in Bengal[43]. The model would appear to have been the "irregular" corps made up of local inhabitants, which, since the 1780's had been used to police certain "tribal areas" - Bhagalpur for example - on the fringes of the Bengal Presidency[44].

Although Ambonese had served in the Company's army for two centuries, the only unit made up solely of Ambonese that had existed until 1810 had been the Ambon Militia, consisting of Ambonese Burgers, which was more in the nature of a home guard. As in the Corps of "Irregulars" in India,

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[42] Letter Martin to Secretary Colonial Dept, Fort William 14 July 1814. Bengal Board Collection p.168 Vol. 5 No. 10 I.O.L.R. E/4/376.

[43] It is interesting to record here that this was not Martin's first experience with native Corps. Shortly after Martin had assumed the duties of the recently murdered Resident of Bencoolen Thomas Parr, he entered the following Minute dated 25 February 1808, on the Bugies Corps of that colony: "The Resident (Martin himself) has already recorded, in his Proceedings of 27 December 1807, his opinion with regard to the expediency of maintaining a small establishment of Buginese in the service of the Company (apparently in contradiction of Parr's idea of abolishing the Corps altogether). Important advances may be derived from the service of a small regulated and efficient Corps of this description on emergencies, when it would be neither practicable nor expedient to detail a party of regular Sepoys into the country ... (These) descendants of the Eastern chiefs still consider themselves as the ... Guardians of the Company's interests and pride themselves upon being employed as agents of the Company"[45]

No doubt Martin saw the Ambonese Christians in the same light as he saw the Buginese, who also hailed from the Moluccas, four years earlier.

[44] See A.Barat <u>The Bengal Native Infantry</u> (1962) Chapter 2.

[45] Minutes of the Bencoolen Residency 25 February 1807.

so, under the British, were the local people given considerable powers of command[46]. The new Ambon Corps was officered by five European and six Ambonese officers. The N.C.O. cadre was Ambonese. Its senior N.C.O. was Sergeant Major Matulesia.

Ver Huell gives a description of the man, which is worth quoting in full at this point:

> "Thomas Matulesia was a man of about thirty five years of age, tall but lean and very dark, who did not seem overly intelligent. He was born a Saparuan, was a member of the Reformed Church and a Burger of Saparua. He had been a sergeant major in the British Ambon Corps. During the revolt he was usually dressed in a uniform with the epaulettes of the Major of Engineers Beetjes, who was killed in the first battle of the revolt. He usually had a bodyguard with him and had adopted the pompous title of "Panhoelo Pangerang diatas Poelo Hinimoa, Haroekoe, Noesa Laoet, Ambon, Ceram dan lain jang berikot", which means: High Chief of War over the Islands Honimoa, Haroekoe, Noesa Laoet, Amboina, Ceram and the nearby Coasts"[47].

Boelen adds to this penpicture:

> "Matulesia overdid things a little when he hung a third epaulette on his chest and wore the gold and diamond haircomb of the murdered Resident's wife in his hair"[48].

By local standards the men of the Ambon corps were well paid under the British; they were armed with rifles, were well dressed and did not have to fight outside the Moluccas, a clause specially written into their contracts. This corps was recruited over the entire Ambonese islands, which accounts for the fact that Matulesia hailed from Saparua.

An unknown, but probably substantial, number of ex-members of the corps took part in the revolt of 1817,

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[46] Barat, A. ibid.

[47] Ver Huell Herinneringen aan een Reis naar Indie, Vol. I pp. 242-244.

[48] Boelen op.cit. p.218.

although it was not an army mutiny. By that time the Corps had been disbanded. Granted Burger rights by Martin on their discharge, they now found themselves without means of support and, as Burgers, outside the village community. Their anger at the Dutch, who refused to re-engage them on acceptable terms, is understandable and as they rowed past the Dutch warships on their return journey to their villages, they gave vent to their indignation by shouting abuse at the sailors[49]. As many took their arms with them, it is incomprehensible that the authorities failed to realize how potentially dangerous they were.

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Due to the complete blockade of Dutch shipping during the Anglo-French-Dutch wars, an acute shortage of specie had arisen in all the Dutch colonies. The paper money introduced in its place was never popular. It was also unsecured and devalued rapidly. The villagers did not trust it. Furthermore it violated the church adat; only silver coins were acceptable for the Poor Boxes in the Church[50].

Martin's concern about specie was such that, in order to obtain it he sold a quantity of cloves to a Captain Walker, the master of the private brig "Fortune". Explaining this sale, Martin wrote to Tucker, Secretary of the Colonial Department at Fort William:

> "I consented to permit that officer to purchase at so low a rate (One Sicca Rupee per pound) to

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[49] Boelen op.cit. p.137.

[50] see pp. 125-129.

> retain for circulation at this island, a quantity of specie which must otherwise have been exported.
>
> Although some of the same considerations have recently engaged my consent to the disposal of an additional quantity of cloves, I have, not withstanding the notoriety of the abundant produce of the last harvest, succeeded in obtaining the price of one Rix Dollar per lb. for the quantity which has been disposed of by private sale. As a reasonable supply of specie has by this means been obtained, I trust that my conduct in these transactions will receive the approbation of the Supreme Government"[51].

Despite these stop-gap arrangements, specie remained scarce and this would in time lead to some disastrously wrong decisions by the Commission which took over the colony for the Dutch government.

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In general it is probably fair to say that Martin, in Ambon, tended to legislate too much but to govern too little. He readily did away with much that existed, but it can be argued that the shortcomings which certainly were evident in the old system were increased by what Van Kemp calls a slipshod administration. His ideas of creating a new order of things were well intended, but it cannot be denied that the other task of the ruler, administration itself, was neglected. Nothing was done regarding the maintenance of buildings, fortifications and roads during the entire period. This meant a considerable lightening of the burden of compulsory supplies and labour and as such was welcomed by the population. However the Dutch returned and seven years of accumulated neglect had to be made good, with the subsequent heavily increased demand for supplies of

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[51] Martin to Bengal Civil/Colonial, 19 June 1814. I.O.L. & R. 167/57.

materials as well as labour services, the inevitable result was a further hardening of the negative attitude to the incoming government. Van Doren argues that British policy in this respect was deliberate. "The British government in the Moluccas aimed more at the downfall than at the flowering of the islands"[52]. According to him this was prompted by the fact that spices were now produced in other British colonies and Ambon, which, it was expected, would be handed back to the Dutch, was seen as a competitor. Van Doren does not back up this assertion with definite proof and may be expressing merely a personal opinion.

Van Doren also asserts, however, that the revolt that broke out after the handing over was in fact already smouldering during British rule, and here he does quote some evidence in support of his case. The Raja of Nollot had already risen against the British appointed Resident Neys of Saparua in 1816. The inhabitants of Siri-Sori Slam (Muslims), whose request to Martin to replace their Christian Raja by one of their own Islamic faith had been refused, had held a number of meetings planning a revolt, but this had been squashed[53]. Such assertions may perhaps be put alongside the assertions of Buyske's that the governing of the natives under British rule was lacking in even handedness. When negory inhabitants complained about their Heads, the latter were often dismissed without a hearing. As a result, Pattis and other Heads lost their authority; they became afraid to punish their people, who, as a consequence, became more and more disobedient and insubordinate[54].

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[52] Van Doren, op.cit. p.18.

[53] ibid p.5.

[54] Buyskes, Report 472. f.7.

In general it appears as if it was felt to be sufficient to draw up rules. A despotism such as Daendels' was not wanted, but it seems likely that Martin went to the other extreme. He failed to see that the Moluccas required a strong hand at the reins at a time when the seeds of disorganisation were already present. This was further demonstrated by unrest among the people and the murder of a British Resident in Haruku in 1815. One might speculate that his Orientalist ideas, with Christian notions superimposed upon them, clouded his judgement. It is, however, important to keep this disorganisation and unrest into its proper perspective. Such riots and murders as did occur were directed at specific officials or events and not at the government as such. Until the establishment of British rule in 1796, the Company rule had been accepted by the population in the same unquestioning way as the rule of native princes had always been accepted by the peasantry. But Martin had diminished the authority of the Regents and thereby automatically that of the government. Also his milder rule had convinced the Moluccas that Dutch rule had been harsh and as a consequence they did not look forward to their possible return. This fear and the general unruliness created a climate fit for revolt. But as we will see in Chapter III, when the revolt came, its goal was not independence of European rule but rather the retention of British government and the prevention of the re-establishment of Dutch authority. After the revolt was over, Buyskes gave it as his "opinion" that once all the Dutch possessions had been taken over by the British, and Holland itself had been incorporated into the French empire, there had been a deliberate policy of assuring the Moluccans that the Dutch, as a nation, had

ceased to exist and would never again be reinstated, so that the Moluccas would remain forever under British rule. The wish was certainly the father of the thought. Buyskes also asserted that many European officials and employees, as well as officers of the armed forces were married in the Moluccas and had settled down there and the news of the restoration of the Dutch nation and later of the London Treaty, returning these colonies to them, were far from welcome[55]. Buyskes was "absolutely convinced" that this dissatisfaction had led to further attempts to intensify anti-Dutch feelings by reminding the people of the extortions of earlier Governors and Residents and predicting that the favourable dispositions regarding schoolmasters, compulsory services, forced deliveries and the like would be rescinded, that paper money would be substituted for hard cash, and that once again their children would be sent to Java as soldiers. They compared their lot to that of the people of Ceram and Goram islands, who could be considered free and independent of Dutch rule and who therefore could sell their produce to the highest bidder of any nation.

"Although I trust" writes Buyskes, "that the top British civil servants and army officers were innocent of these incitements, it is certain that some subaltern individuals of that nation as well as some native chiefs have been guilty of those acts. How else can it be explained that the mutineers of Saparua, immediately after taking Fort Duurstede, did hoist the British flag, and that the attack on Fort Zeelandia at Haruku took place with a number of these flags

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[55] Buyskes, Report No. 472 f.7.

flying?"[56]

A more wide-ranging appreciation of the situation at the end of the British period comes from the work of Van der Kemp. He puts it this way: "The natives, until the arrival of the British, only knew what they called (and which said it all) 'the Company'. They had always accepted that the way her servants understood their duties was the way it ought to be"[57]. With the advent of British rule they saw the possibility of a much more liberal direction, the appeal of which grew even more, now that they saw this rule slip away again. Even if their unfavourable disposition to the returning government had not been stimulated by "unattainable ideas of liberty and independence"[58], it would nonetheless not have altered the fact that the Dutch returned under much more adverse circumstances than those under which they had left.

. . .

Through Napoleon's debacle in Russia, which suddenly opened up prospects for a restoration of old relationships, the colonial question became again acute. On a visit to England in April 1813 the Prince of Orange made some tentative enquiries as to the intentions of the British government. They did not need to feel themselves bound by the Kew Letters since the colonies had been returned to the Netherlands at the Peace of Amiens and had afterwards been conquered again

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[56] ibid f.9.

[57] Van der Kemp (1911) op.cit. p.477.

[58] P.Meyer, Kroniek, (1841) p.563.

by Britain. But Castlereagh did not hold the view that this conquest was necessarily the final word. In principle he was prepared to return the colonies to the Netherlands, but did not commit himself as to how far he was prepared to go. From the start he coupled the colonial question to that of the future size of the Netherlands in Europe. The stronger its position on France's north boundary was going to be, the greater would be its claim on its former colonies.

Only after the battle of Leipzig did Castlereagh declare that the situation as at 1 January 1803 was to be the basis of negotiations. By the London Convention, dated 13 August 1814, it was finally decided that the colonies, with the exceptions of Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope, would be returned to the Netherlands within six months. The Netherlands had no reason for complaint. They received back the East Indian Archipelago and with it the chance to become a major colonial power, a chance which, in the century that followed, was eagerly accepted.

The transfer itself was a difficult matter. A Commission was appointed by William I. There were many old hands eager for appointments, but the king preferred new people and appointed C.Elout, G.Baron van der Capellen, and A.A.Buyskes as Commissioners General, to take over the East Indies from the British officials on the spot.

Elout was the oldest and most capable of the three, a member of the Council of State, who had distinguished himself in a number of earlier appointments. Van der Capellen was Secretary of State for Trade and the Colonies and was Governor General designate. Buyskes, the only one who had had personal experience in the Indies, went as the maritime

expert[59].

Napoleon's return from Elba delayed the departure of the Commission. It was not until April 1816 that the Commission arrived in Java with a group of civil servants and eighteen hundred soldiers.

To the astonishment and indignation of the Commission, Fendall, Raffles' successor, who had been led to believe that he had a three year tenure, had instructions to attempt delays. Only after receiving new instructions did he transfer the colony, on 19 August 1816. Through all these delays the Moluccas did not change hands until 1817, almost three years after the London Convention[60].

From the Indonesian side there was at first little resistance against the change of government. Outside the Moluccas only in the perpetually restless Banten and Cheribon did some disturbances occur and the Java War of Dipo Negoro, which broke out nine years later no doubt had some of its roots in the events of 1816, but that falls outside the scope of this study, as does the Padri war in Sumatra, which can be seen as the result of an Islamic religious controversy and as such not a direct result of the change of sovereignty. But in the Moluccas a return of the spice monopoly, and the accompanying hongi-expeditions, were feared. The fierce explosion that occurred there had to be put down by Buyskes himself.

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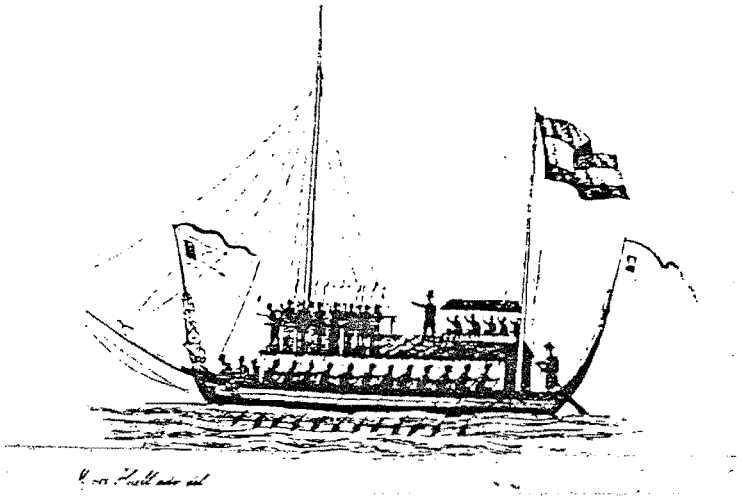
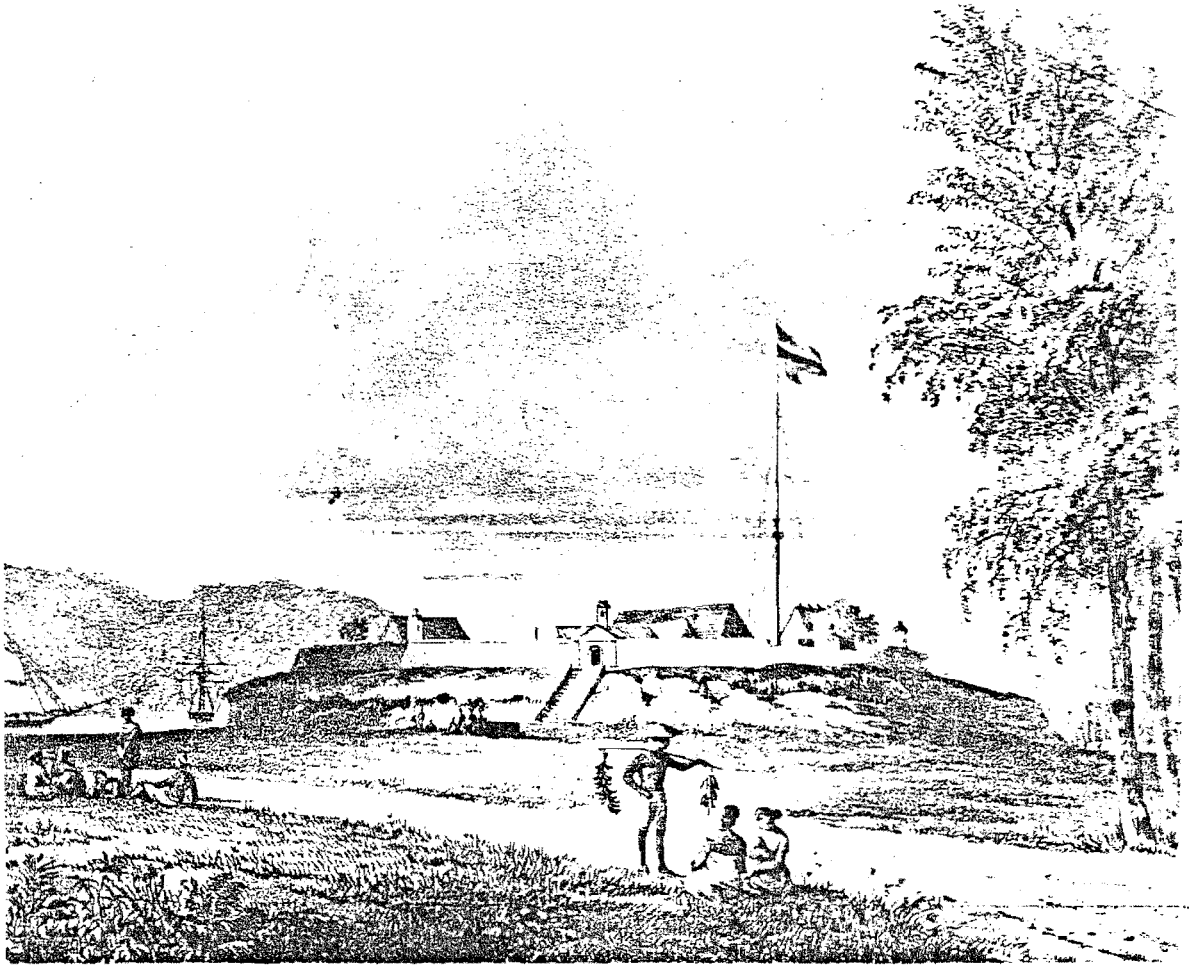
[59] Van Houte. op.cit. p.179.

[60] ibid p.180.



Ambonese Orembaai
Drawing by Ver Huell



Fort Duurstede Saparua about 1840 after a litho of C.W.M. van de Velde

CHAPTER III [1]

THE REVOLT

On 19 August 1816 the island of Java was formally taken over from the British by the Commission General sent for that purpose from Holland. They established their headquarters in Batavia and at the end of that year appointed a Commission to take over the Government of the Moluccas. As First Commissioner they appointed N.Engelhard, described as "a capable and decent man". As Second Commissioner and Governor of the Moluccas they appointed J. van Middelkoop. Van Middelkoop was later described as a man who perpetually tried to curry favour with his superiors, egotistical and scheming and given to making ridiculous scenes with his colleagues[2]. Also in the party that sailed for the Moluccas was 27 year-old Johannes Van den Berg with his wife and young family. Van den Berg was very well connected. His wife was the grand-daughter of a past Governor General, W.A.Alting (1780-1796), and a niece of another past Governor General, J.Siberg (1801-1805), who still lived in Batavia. His own father, who, as Resident of Yogya, had amassed a fortune in the V.O.C. era, was well regarded by King William I, whom he had represented on a

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[1] This chapter concentrates on the course of events of the revolution. As a full discussion of the immediate causes of the revolt - seen in the context of contemporary analysis of those causes - forms the subject of Chapter IV, only passing references to these causes are made at this stage.

[2] Enklaar, op.cit. p.48.

number of delegations to Paris and London in the Napoleonic era. The Commissioner Engelhard was Van den Berg's uncle[3].

The Commissioner arrived in Ambon on 17 February 1817, having been detained by lack of ships and manpower. The number of troops that accompanied them was extremely small for these reasons, but Batavia was confident that the Moluccas would be taken over without trouble. Here was one of the many mistakes and miscalculations they made.

Because of the influence the past Governor General Siberg had with the current officeholder, Van der Capellen, Van den Berg, who had been sent out to the Indies as a mere Class III civil servant, was appointed Resident of Saparua. The appointment to such an important and difficult post of a man so young, and so completely lacking in training and experience in the civil service and in native affairs, was surprising to say the least. The Moluccas had always been considered a difficult area to govern, in that there was much rivalry between negories, and Saparua had the worst reputation of them all[4].

In the V.O.C. era, however, the Saparua Residency, which produced more cloves than the rest of the Moluccas

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[3] Van den Berg. "De Tragedie op het Eiland Saparua" in Bijdragen Vol. 104 (1948) pp. 242-245.

[4] R.Leirissa. "Notes on Central Maluku in the 19th Century", Prisma No. 22, September 1981, pp. 63-64. In this article Leirissa argues that most of these troubles sprang from land and boundary disputes, leading to interminable and often bloody battles between negories. He notes that opposition towards the clove monopoly was not frequent. Other than the Pattimura Revolt of 1817, only the attempted uprising of 1829 was brought about by this monopoly. No other major opposition can be noted on the basis of the monopoly.

put together, had been an el Dorado for corrupt Residents[5]. Buyskes alludes to this corruption in his Report to the Commissioners in Batavia dated 17 November 1817:

> "By sheer coincidence it came to my notice through the papers of a Resident, who was in function forty years ago in the Saparua Residency, that this official in a very short period of time gathered a fortune of one hundred thousand Rix Dollars and since the salary of a Resident at that time was extremely low and there was almost no opportunity to engage in the smuggling trade of spices, it only leaves me to suppose that extortion must have been commonplace. This suspicion is confirmed by the considerable debt the heirs of the Resident of Saparua, Blomdeel, are still owed by several of the principal Heads of that island, the bonds of which have been confiscated by the past British Resident Martin and passed on to the Commissioners, because he felt he had to interfere in this debt settlement. The debt was (as I understand it) originally for fines imposed by the Moluccan government of the day, which the Resident had to advance, after which it was left to him to recoup as best he could. He then made arrangements by way of Bonds or Pledges for payment of such amounts as, after the deduction of moneys due to the Negory Heads for spice payments were still owing. I presume that these practices took place in all Residencies although Saparua, as the most densely populated island, which produced the greatest quantities of cloves, must have been the richest plum, and I suppose that this is the reason why the past Governor General Siberg has recommended his nephew Van den Berg to Your Excellencies, for the post of Resident of Saparua"[6].

The appointment of Van den Berg was not the only blunder the Batavian Commission General was to make in its Ambon appointments.

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[5] Olivier (Land en Zeetogten in Nederland's Indië, Amsterdam (1830) Vol.I p.131) quotes a few examples of the unbelievable misuse of some officials in the V.O.C. era: "The Resident (of Saparua) whose servant was a hairdresser, had this man make wigs of goats' hair. As a mark of honour he made the Regents wear these wigs after having their own hair cut off. Each Regent had to pay one hundred Ducatons for this honour".

[6] Buyskes Report 472, ff. 1-2. Archief Schneither Inv. No. 57. No. 128. Rijksarchief, The Hague.

Van den Berg arrived on Saparua on 15 March and assumed office on the twenty first. The official change of government of the Moluccas as a whole did not take place until 25 March, but Van den Berg's takeover was possible because the agreement between the Commissioners General and the British Resident, W.B.Martin[7] had been reached at Ambon.

The official transfer of Government took place on the morning of 25 March 1817. The British Resident, Martin, had presented a Memorandum of Transfer to the Commissioners describing the state of the Moluccas. On the subject of Justice it asserted that the Dutch Rule of Justice had remained unchanged as guaranteed by the terms of capitulation in 1810. On the subject of Trade, the Memorandum claimed that the Spice Monopoly had been run "in general on the same terms as existed previously". The inhabitants had still been obligated to sell their entire crops to the government, but the prices to the producers had been increased.

The incoming Dutch Commission was led to believe that the system of government was much as it had been before. Little or no change had been made, except that the supervision of the Regents and other heads had been much stricter than under the previous Dutch government.

Mainly on the strength of Martin's very favourable report on the school system, which was still in the care of Rev. J.Carey as Superintendent of Schools, no change was made here, at least for the time being. But this situation was not to last long. The new Dutch administration did not

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[7] Although Martin's official title was "Resident" there were eight other Residents in the Moluccas who were subordinate to him. His powers were therefore those of a Governor. A similar arrangement existed in Malaya under the British.

support Careys authority sufficiently and a decline in school attendance soon became obvious[8]. Kam, who had disagreed with Carey's religious views on many points, could only see Carey's further school and missionary work as creating confusion and difficulties and wanted to take his place and in this he had the full support of the government. This is the reason why Jabez's work in the Moluccas came to a sudden end. In a letter of 26 May 1816, Kam had already urged the London Missionary Society to approach the Dutch Ambassador in London in order to frustrate the plans of the Baptist Society, "which is very anxious to get full alowans (sic) to promoot christianity in the Molucos islands"[9].

But now, independent from Kam's endeavours, came the decision of the Commissioners General in Batavia that Jabez should be honorably discharged as superintendent of schools. Commissioner Buyskes in particular, newly returned from Ambon, saw it as "very unusual that this school-supervision was undertaken by one person and a foreigner at that, who does not understand one single word of our language"[10]. He felt that Jabez's continuation in that position had been out of consideration for Resident Martin, rather than on the ground of his usefulness in this post under Dutch rule. Jabez Carey twice petitioned the government for permission to remain in Ambon as a missionary, but Buyskes was adamant and early 1818 the decision came down that again "the request by the Baptist minister Carey, to be allowed to make converts out of the Dutch Reformed Parishes, has been turned down"[11].

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[8] Report of Mr Livett, a British merchant living in Ambon to the London Missionary Society, dated 12 May 1818.

[9] Enklaar, op.cit. p.47.

[10] P.V.d.Kemp "Herstel van het Nederlandsch Gezag" Bijdragen Vol. 66 (1912) p.148.

[11] ibid Vol. 65 (1911) p.451.

Pearce Carey puts it thus: "he eventually left the Moluccas because the Dutch government would allow no preaching nor baptizing, save in the name and the mode of their State Church"[12]. The older Carey was upset and disappointed but Jabez returned without, he said, resentment or discord. The schoolmasters' position and their salaries remained the same, including the payment of wages by the government. This point is important since later it was alleged that the change in the existing school system, upon the return of the Dutch, was one of the causes of the revolt[13].

. . .

The small military force that accompanied the Commission did nothing to reinforce or enhance their prestige. Ill equipped as they were, they could be seen standing on guard duty, "half naked and armed with a bamboo spear"[14]. This was in part due to the shortage of men and equipment, caused by transport difficulties, and partly by the false hope of the Batavian government that troops might be readily enlisted in the Moluccas.

The Ambon Corps of well over four hundred men, created by Martin, had been offered to the Dutch when the London Treaty had been negotiated, but for a number of reasons this offer had not been taken up. One of these reasons was the optimistic expectation that, once the Moluccas had been

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[12] Pearce Carey op.cit. p.305.

[13] J.v.Doren, Thomas Matulesia het Hoofd der Opstandelingen op het Eiland Honimoa. Amsterdam (1857) pp. 175-188.

[14] Buyskes op.cit. f.9.

occupied, it would not be difficult to acquire the type of soldier who made up this Corps. Article 11 of the Instructions for the Moluccan Commission directed that negotiations be entered into, with the British Military Commandant at Ambon, for the transfer of native troops in British pay. The British, however, could not agree to a direct transfer because of a special clause in their recruitment contracts. It could be argued that this clause was expressly included because the return of the Moluccas was not considered entirely unlikely at the time the contracts were entered into. The contract explicitly stated that, in the case of a transfer of sovereignty, the soldiers had to be discharged so as to be free to join the Dutch army or not, as they chose. This was made clear to the Commissioners when the soldiers unanimously demanded that this clause be upheld.

Martin, who throughout the change-over acted with correctness and courtesy, cannot have foreseen the consequences of the ceremonial disbanding of the Ambon Corps that followed. Nor, for that matter did the Commissioners at the time. Only in later documents do we find negative reactions to it[15]. Martin ordered all Native Soldiers in the Moluccas to report to Ambon, some days after the official ratification of the agreement with the Dutch on 24 March. They came in their decorated Orembaais to the Capital. The British Resident made flattering speeches and handed out presents, as well as Burger Patents, granting burger rights to all discharged soldiers[16]. There was nothing unusual in this,

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[15] ibid f.9.

[16] e.g. J.Boelen "Het Merkwaardig Dagboek van een Nederlandsch Zeeman Vol. II Amsterdam 1860.

the Dutch government had always followed this same practice. What did raise objections on this occasion was the date of discharge and the very large number discharged and granted burger rights at the one time. The Burger Patents were ante dated before 24 March, a fact that some writers have presented as irregular, but this is arguable. Boelen notes in his Journal that the ex-soldiers, returning to their villages, used the occasion to display their dislike of the Dutch without restraint[17]. Among these returning soldiers was Thomas Matulesia.

It is not difficult to see that this return to the villages, without proper means of support, of so many more or less trained ex-soldiers, part of whom were armed, could have dire consequences, if the seed of discontent were to fall on fertile ground, as indeed it did. So, according to Buyskes, these ex-soldiers soon became a danger to the public order[18].

The question that should be asked here is whether it would have been possible for the civil and military authorities to do something about this matter. The answer must be yes. Engelhard gives us the explanation: The Commission General in Java required troops for Java and issued its Instructions to the military authorities in Ambon. Article 5 of these Instructions ordered that recruitment from the disbanded Ambon Corps be exclusively for Java. This was the reason for the refusal to join, most of the troops did not want to leave their home-islands. The result, wrote Engelhard, was that only 33 of a Corps of four hundred

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[17] Ver Huell, Q.M.R. Herinneringen aan een Reis naar Oost Indië Haarlem (1835) p.37.

[18] Buyskes op.cit. f.10.

entered Dutch service, and most of these were Javanese[19]. The objection was not to the joining as such, so long as they would have been allowed to serve exclusively in the Moluccas, as they had done under British rule. The Dutch Military Command in the Moluccas refused to budge on Article 5, even though the army's strength there was far below requirements. The Residents of Saparua and Hila strongly recommended that the Corps be re-engaged for the Moluccas, no doubt with an eye to their own pitiful forces, but the military command remained adamant. Governor Van Middelkoop also objected to recruiting local soldiers for the army since he supposed "that this will encourage the smuggling of spices instead of guarding against it"[20]. Engelhard did not agree with this view "because the British had very successfully made use of the Ambonese Corps, who had fought just as strongly against the smuggling trade as had the Dutch troops before them"[21]. Once the revolt started, the objection to Article 5 disappeared and the Moluccan Commission, by Decree No. 17, dated 8 June 1817 ordered the Commandant to re-engage such of the ex-British force as were prepared to enter service for the Moluccas only. By this time, of course, the harm was done; many of the ex-soldiers were either actively engaged in the revolt or were sympathetic to it.

A revolt such as exploded in the Moluccas almost certainly must have been prepared on a wide scale in the villages, and it is highly improbable that the village heads

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[19] Middelkoop, Sourabaya Report.

[20] Middelkoop, Sourabaya Report.

[21] Engelhard's Batavia Report.

would remain entirely unaware of it. Heads who, for whatever reason, did not want to see it develop, were in a most difficult position when deciding whether or not to inform the European government officials. The European rulers on the other hand, needed to be extremely accommodating to those people, if they did not want to discourage this kind of information, as otherwise, they might well expose themselves to the possibility of suddenly and unpreparedly being faced with a catastrophic situation. But at the time of the Dutch return this accommodation was sadly lacking.

That revolt was smouldering even before the takeover is obvious from the fact, that within a few days of that event, there were secret assemblies and correspondence between the people of Hitu and those of the North Coast of Haruka and probably with those of Saparua, whereby solemn vows were made under oath that they would co-operate to achieve freedom and independence. A report had been sent to the Commissioners at Ambon by Resident Uitenbroek of Haruku, advising that, on 20 April, only twenty one days after Van den Berg had taken up his post in Saparua, the ex Rajas of Pelauw and Aboro, two loyal servants of the Dutch government (who, incidentally had a grudge against the British, since Resident Martin had deposed them for alleged misconduct) informed the Resident that a meeting had been arranged in the forest of the Liang district, in Hitu, of over one hundred men on 4 April, on which occasion a conspiracy against the Dutch was entered into and the conspirators vowed, by means of Open Letters to the inhabitants of Ceram and other islands, to influence them to

break with the Dutch government and join their conspiracy[22]. Equally perplexing is the fact that those Dutch officials did not act against these assemblies when informed of them by some loyal Heads. Those officials not only refused to believe them, but had their informants flogged and arrested for their trouble. Not just one but every official the Heads turned to, acted with the same lack of insight.

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The first mistake Van den Berg made in Saparua occurred soon after his arrival. An Ambonese Burger, Anthony Rhebok, son of an old and respected Saparua family who had served the Company faithfully for many generations, and his friend Filip Latumahina, while drunk, had beaten one Daniel Sorbeck, until the latter fell into the water. Sorbeck lodged a complaint with the Resident, who heard the case and sentenced Rhebok to a caning. This was a grave mistake as it went completely against the burger rights. Burgers, when sentenced to corporal punishment, were tied to a wooden bench. On this they lay and were then beaten with a rope. Only Negory-folk and other non-burgers were tied to a tree and caned. The punishment amounted to much the same thing, but it was the "form" that mattered, Rhebok and Latumahina had "lost face". Benjamin Pattiwael, a son of the Samuel Pattiwael who took part in the revolt and took care of the surviving child of the Resident (see p.84) described the sequel of the caning as follows:

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[22] Buyskes ibid.

> "here upon both went home with a bitter heart (sakit hati = a sick heart) and subsequently went from village to village over the entire island of Saparua, to agitate the inhabitants and induce them to join them in the fight against the "Company". Before this, however, they assembled at a lonely spot in the forest and swore an oath to disobey all the orders of the Resident"[23].

Rhebok in particular was seething with rage and soon became Matulesia's Second in Command.

The Resident, although aware that rumours had been circulating regarding discontent among the Saparuans but convinced that he was enforcing the orders of the Governor in a reasonable manner, saw no reason to attach any weight to such "marketplace gossip"[24]. When one Pieter Soehoka came to report these rumours to him, he investigated the matter privately. He also summoned the Regents of Booy and Nollot and, on their assurances that all was well, he had Soehoka also caned. A few days later, however, the Njora of Nollot, the Raja's wife, while having a cup of coffee with Mrs Van den Berg told her in all innocence that Soehoka had told the truth and had been unjustly punished, since there were indeed daily meetings at Nollot, and the negory folk were readying their weapons[25]. But, like his chiefs in Ambon, so too did Van den Berg ignore the warnings.

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[23] C.Van den Berg. "The Tragedie op het Eiland Saparoea in het jaar 1817 tijdens den Opstand in the Molukken", Bijdragen Vol. 109 (1945) p.262. The author of that article was a great-great-grandson of Resident Van den Berg and a direct descendant of the child that survived the massacre. His source was a report of Benjamin Pattiwael, part of the Ds. de Vries Archive in the possession of the Van den Berg family.

[24] J.Boelen, Het Merkwaardig Dagboek van een Nederlandsch Zeeman, Amsterdam (1865) Vol. II p.17.

[25] V.d.Berg (1948) op.cit. p.281.

The Raja of Siri-Sori Serani[26], Johannes Kirauly, a faithful servant of the Dutch government, had also heard of plans for a revolt. He was reluctant to inform the Resident for fear that the latter would name him as his informant; the result could have been death at the hands of villagers, both for himself and his family. He therefore decided to report these rumours to the Governor in Ambon in person, but neither Governor Van Middelkoop nor his fellow Commissioner Engelhard would believe his confidential report and for his trouble he found himself under town-arrest in Ambon.

The Resident of Haruku, Uytenbroek, also received a warning from several Heads, including the Raja of Pilauw. This Resident sent for the Raja of Sameti and secretly ordered him to investigate. This Raja reported in due course that the rumours were figments of the imagination of the informers and the Resident had them sent to Ambon, where, like the Raja of Siri-Sori, he was placed under strict police surveillance.

. . .

Ambon required timber for building purposes[27]. Van

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[26] The Siri-Sori Negory was divided into two Communities; Siri-Sori Serani which was Christian and Siri-Sori Slam which was Muslim. Each of these two communities had its own Raja.

[27] Both the cutting of timber and the supply of the orembaai for its transport were demanded under the compulsory labour obligations. The people of Porto and Haria, from where the timber was to be shipped, were not satisfied with the wages paid. Although the population in V.O.C. times had always been obligated to supply both the boat and the rowers for the government, this custom had lapsed under British rule and its re-instatement was strongly resented. More will be said about this later in this chapter.

den Berg received orders to have this timber cut and transported. This compulsory labour created dissatisfaction[28]. The timber, however, had been cut and loaded in an Orembaai[29] at Porto. The Resident, who now had been warned by the coffee-drinking Njora of Nollot, decided to send an orderly to Porto with orders for the vessel to depart and for him to travel with it to Ambon, with a letter informing the Governor of the current rumours[30]. The orderly ran into a hostile crowd who refused to let the vessel sail, mistreated him and kept him captive.

The story of the start of the revolt is given in the Porto Report[31], written in Malay by one of the Porto schoolmasters. It records the plundering of the post prahu at Porto. It begins by describing how six men, including Johannes Matulesia, a brother of Thomas Matulesia, went round the houses at Haria to urge the men to come to a meeting in the "wildernis" of Haria, to discuss the rumour that the Company was going to press people to go to Java as soldiers. One hundred men then gathered and, after prayers, decided to destroy Saparua's Fort Duurstede. Anybody who refused to participate would be killed by the community and their families exterminated. Six days later, on 9 May, another meeting was called to appoint a leader or Kapitan. Thomas Matulesia got up and said: "I shall be Kapitan and will

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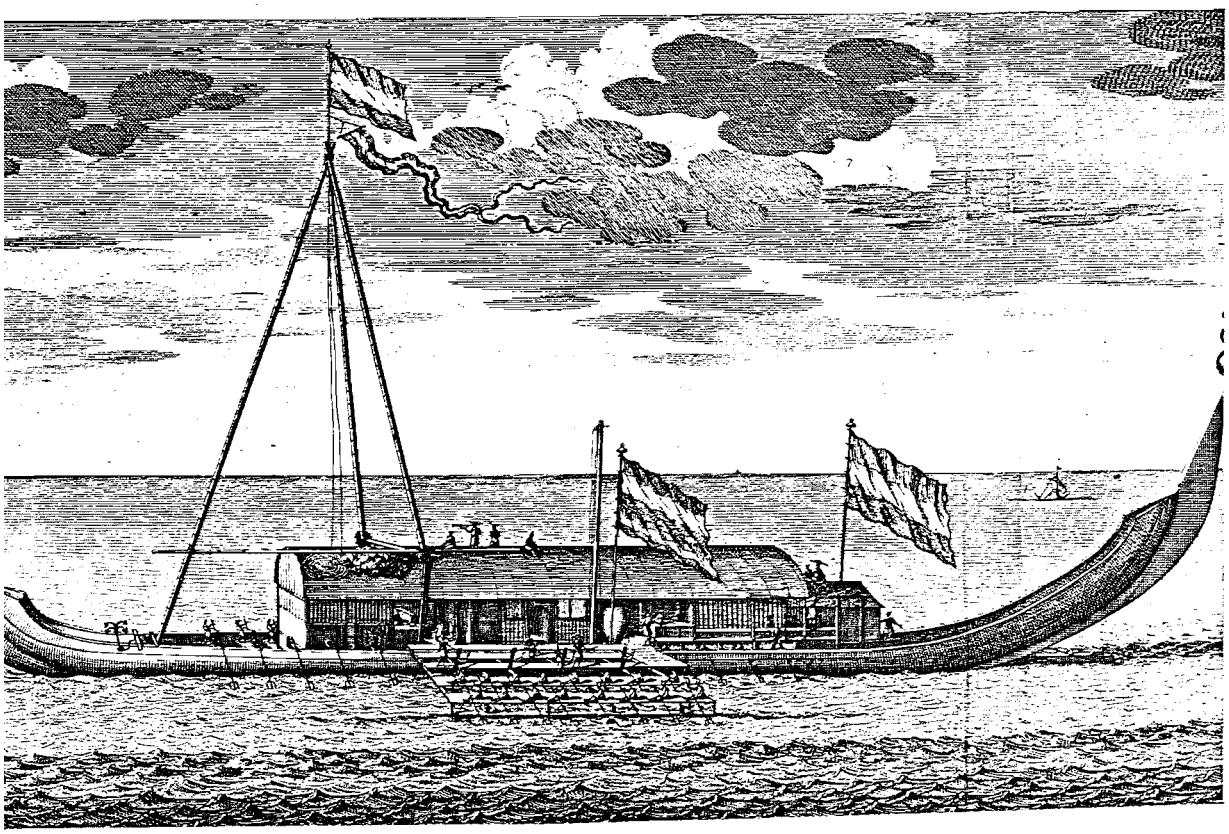
[28] Buyskes quotes as an example of Van Middelkoop's injudiciously given orders the order of 12 April 1817, for the supply of timber. Cf Chapter IV.

[29] Orembaai - a large prahu - see illustration next page.

[30] Van Doren p.18.

[31] The Porto Report is an unsigned report dated 13 November 1817. It is a Report on the Revolt by the schoolmaster of Porto who took part in the revolt. There is some doubt as to his true identity: he was either Rissakota or Strudiek. The original is in the Van Alphen Archive, Rijks Archief, The Hague, No. XXII - 315.



Kora kora engraving from Valentijnes Oud en Nieuw Oost Indië.

gather a fleet of Orembaais, attack and destroy Fort Duurstede and kill the Resident".

On 15 May, after hearing about the outbreak at Porto, the Resident - who, whatever his failings, does not seem to have been lacking in personal courage - rode to Porto alone, where he was accosted by the rebels and not allowed to return home. When this news reached Saparua his clerk Ornek at once rode off on horseback to relieve his chief but after encountering an armed mob and getting shot in the hand, he was forced to retreat to Saparua to obtain reinforcements. Ornek now made a second attempt with a force of twelve Javanese soldiers and some twenty armed burgers. After further casualties they had to retreat to Saparua once more. Among the rebels they encountered were Rissakota, Strudiek, Pattiwael and Thomas Matulesia, all of whom lived at Haria.

The rebels intended to murder the Resident immediately but Rissakota[32] argued with the mob explaining that the revolt was a matter of the entire island; why should the Resident be killed in Porto or Haria, thus putting the blame on these two negories alone. The Resident was then allowed to go back to Saparua and the Fort Duurstede. Rissakota's admonitions could indicate that he was not completely convinced that the rebels would be victorious, or that his sympathies were at least to some extent with the Resident. These same sentiments could also have been the reason why Soehoka and others reported the forest meetings to the authorities.

Shortly after his return Van den Berg received a

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[32] Porto Report, passim.

visit from Anthonie Rhebok and Latumahina, the sons of prominent Saparuan families, whom he had caused to be caned some weeks earlier. On the face of it Rhebok seemed to have taken the punishment in good part because he now came, he explained, to give the Resident some good advice. He pointed out that the situation was critical since not only the island of Saparua was in revolt but Ambon was also involved in the movement. Rather than take harsh measures, he said, it would be wiser to try to solve the matter peacefully. Van den Berg expressed readiness and assured Rhebok that he regretted the punishment he had had to impose. At Rhebok's behest he then wrote a letter to people of Siri-Sori Slam, who, according to Rhebok felt particularly aggrieved. He agreed to deliver the letter. All he did with it was to stick it to a post in the Saparua market place. He had no doubt used the opportunity provided by his journey to see what the defences of Fort Duurstede were like.

It seems unbelievable, but Mrs Van den Berg somehow managed to get a boat to go to Ambon with a letter to her uncle, the Commissioner Engelhard, imploring him to send relief. The clerk Ornek, whose loyalty never faltered, sent a letter by the same carrier to Commissioner Middelkoop, the Governor.

Instead of defending his fort to the utmost and, pending the arrival of reinforcements, bringing his guns into play to scare off the rebels, the resident, possibly because he believed the situation was hopeless, now had the white flag hoisted. This act, on the morning of 16 May, was certainly not an act that would encourage the garrison. The stream of mutineers steadily increased and Matulesia was now asked to lead an assault on the Fort. In the first wave, the

Resident was shot in the leg and collapsed. The twelve Javanese soldiers - the entire native garrison - thinking that the Resident was dead, jumped down the walls, perhaps to flee, but were promptly killed by the rebels, who now scaled the walls in their hundreds. The Resident, who was still alive, was tied to a pole, a schoolmaster stepped forward to say a prayer and the Resident was shot repeatedly. The rebels then dragged Mrs Van den Berg and her children to where her husband's body lay and they were literally hacked to death. Only one child, a little boy of about five, survived[33]. The rebels then - significantly - ran up the British flag over the fort.

While the revolt in Saparua was in full swing and had already spread to Haruku and Hitu, the Commissioners General in Ambon were acting in a most peculiar fashion. Engelhard reports a hysterical dispute that broke out when Van

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[33] The little boy who survived was seriously wounded; he had a sabre cut across the head and his ear was cut in two. Later in the night when some natives came to have another look at the place of the massacre, the child lifted it's head saying "Goea belom mati" - I am not dead yet. (Source: Pattiwael Report quoted by Van den Berg (1945) op.cit.) Cf. Ch. III p.78. One of the women took it and brought it to Matulesia. There are two versions of his reaction. The first is that he said to those who as yet wanted to kill the child that "God had shown He wanted the child to live and God would be angry if His wishes were ignored". The other version is that where an ex-servant of the Resident asked that he and his wife might look after the child, Matulesia said: "Tra verdoelie, abil itu babie putih" - It doesn't matter, take the white pig. Whichever version is the correct one, the child was looked after by Salomon Pattiwael and his wife, who lived in the forest until the end of the rebellion. In November 1817 a band of rebels surrendered at Tiouw bringing the child with them. Commander Ver Heull then had the child looked after on board his ship and in due course handed it over to its grandparents in Sourabaya. The boy lived to the ripe old age of 82. Source: Ver Huell pp. 230-240. The boy's great-grandson is the author of De Tragedie in Saparua, an attempt at justifying Resident Van den Berg's conduct in 1817.

Middelkoop planned to send a new Resident to his post without allowing him any fund whatever. When Engelhard did not concur with his decision, Middelkoop declared that he was unable to govern with Engelhard's obstructions and threatened to relinquish the Governorship. He demanded to be placed under arrest by the military commander, who promptly refused, saying that it was not within his competence to arrest a governor. Van Middelkoop was dissuaded, but the incident shows the caliber of the men who were in charge of the Moluccas at that critical time[34].

. . .

When Mrs Van den Berg's letter and the one from the clerk Ornek about the revolt at Saparua reached Ambon, the High Council gathered to discuss ways and means to quell the revolt. Commander Ver Huell of H.M. "Evertsen" wanted to sail for Saparua immediately to relieve Fort Duurstede. There were drawbacks to this plan, such as the large size of the ship for the shallow waters of Saparua and the weather at that time of the year. The East Monsoon had set in, bringing very rough seas to the South of the Uliasan islands. In the ship's Journals of the next few weeks several accidents caused by the monsoon are recorded[35], but since "Evertsen"'s Commander was prepared to take his ship, there was much to be said for immediate strong action to relieve the fort, save the people and suppress the revolt quickly.

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[34] Engelhard Letter to Commission General, Batavia dated 12 June 1817, quoted by Van der Kemp in Bijdragen Vol. 65 (1911) p.611.

[35] Ver Huell Vol. I p.102.

The fate that had befallen the government people of Saparua on 16 May was as yet unknown in Ambon. Rather than heed the opinions of Commander Ver Huell, the Council took the doubtless well meaning advice of Resident Martin (who was sailing for Bengal the next day), and the Harbour Master, Waith, who, on the basis of earlier experiences, felt that it would be unwise to send a ship of the line. The only ship not too large to sail out of the Bay of Ambon and into the Bay of Saparua at that time of the year, they advised, was the Corvette H.M. "Iris". But she had arrived in port only the day before in a rather distressed state and it would require a number of days to make her shipshape again.

The Council decided on 16 May that the "Evertsen" should be kept at Ambon and that H.M. Frigate "Maria Reigersbergen", which was expected in Port soon from Ternate, would be sent to Saparua. Ver Huell received orders to anchor his ship just past the South-East point of the Fort Victoria, in other words right in front of the main part of the town, her batteries loaded with live ammunition so that, in the unhoped for event of a revolt, resolute action could be taken[36].

. . .

As no warships were available immediately the Council decided to send an expedition to Saparua in native boats. The organisation was in the hands of Lt. Colonel Krayenhoff, a weak officer whose appointment as military commander had been very much a matter of second choice, symptomatic of the

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[36] Ver Huell Vol. I, p.129.

general shortage of officers in the army[37].

He appointed Major Beetjes of the Engineer Corps, who some years earlier had worked on Saparua as a civil engineer and thus had local knowledge, to take command of a detachment composed of 120 men of the naval ships, under their own officers, plus thirty European and fifty native troops. The whole plan was later condemned by General Anthing, the Army Commandant, on the grounds that Beetjes, who had served only in the Engineering Corps and thus had had no experience as a field officer, was given command, and also on the grounds of the composition of the detachment. "It should have been composed of trained troops, and the seamen, certainly not less courageous but less experienced in tactical matters, should have been kept in Ambon to protect the fort"[38].

The expedition left Ambon on 17 May, marching to the Baguala Pass, where it was hoped to find boats to take them to Saparua[39]. On arrival it was found that no boats were available and the troops marched on to Tial where boats were found and the crossing was made to the Haruku negory. Here news reached them that the east coast of Haruku island had joined the Saparua revolt; this information decided Beetjes to leave a detachment of 55 men at Haruku negory. With the rest of his troops he now went round the north coast of Haruku and then between the islands of Haruku and Saparua under cover of darkness, reaching Saparua Bay in the morning.

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[37] V.d.Kemp, Bijdragen Vol. 65 (1911) p.403 and pp. 407-408.

[38] Anthing Report 20 June, 1817, quoted by V.d. Kemp in Bijdragen (1911) p.602.

[39] Journal Lt. H.P.M.'t Hoofd, Rijksarchief, The Hague. passim.

The strong surf made the landing of the ten kora-koras near Fort Duurstede impossible, so the boats, sailing in line abreast, made for Paperoe, all running on to the beach together. The landing-site proved to be an unfortunate choice as the ground was very marshy. The landing was a hasty affair with many of the troops jumping into the water and getting their powder wet. The rebels, led by Matulesia and Rhebok[40] were lying in ambush in the dense brushwood that ran along the beach, and they opened heavy and accurate fire. The troops formed into three divisions on the beach but the resistance was too strong and they were beaten back. Most of the officers, including the commander Major Beetjes, were killed. The boats, which had been left unguarded, had drifted away from the beach and the retreating troops had to swim for them. Many of the exhausted men, who had been on the move for 24 hours, were shot or cut down with swords while up to their necks in the water. One boat with about 50 men capsized and all of them drowned. Only one boat got away and eventually reached Zeelandia on Haruku. Only 30 men had survived the battle.

Matulesia, who had conducted his fight well, now changed his simple uniform for that of Major Beetjes and as a further embelishment hung the third epaulette, mentioned earlier, on his chest. He ordered the people of Nusa Laut, who, he felt, had not supported him properly, to bury the dead. Two survivors were found amongst the corpses and both were spared; one because he pretended to be English, as proof of which he showed his tattoos, and the other because he was

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[40] Van Doren, op.cit. p.32.

a drummer and a tailor by trade[41].

The rebels did not rest, they called on the entire south coast population of Ceram and their call met with a large response. Their ready participation could possibly be explained by the fact that the Dutch were known to be intent on the complete elimination of the lucrative spice smuggling trade between the Cerammers and the Makassarese. Over a thousand fierce mountain Alfurs crossed to Saparua and took part in the fighting when it broke out again. Matulesia also sent a Ceram-owned boat to the independent Raja of Bali, asking for a supply of gunpowder. The Raja obliged but the vessel was intercepted by the corvette "Wilhelmina" and its cargo confiscated, but other attempts were more successful. The "Porto Report" mentions that on ten occasions between 28 August and 13 October 1817 Matulesia bought gunpowder, and paid for it with the cloves he had found in the stores of Fort Duurstede[42].

The participation of the Ceram Alfurs must not be seen as a widening of the conflict beyond the Moluccas; the Ceram Alfurs were part of the Moluccas. Neither should the gunpowder supplies from Bali be taken as such an indication. The Balinese had no quarrel with the Dutch; both Bali and Lombok were independent in all but name until 1841 and even by 1885 only a small part of Bali was effectively occupied. The barter of gunpowder for spices was purely a matter of trade as far as the Balinese were concerned. For them it was business without risk, the cargoes were carried in Ceram-owned boats and payment in spices was received before the

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[41] ibid.

[42] Bijdragen Vol. 65 (1911) p.641.

gunpowder was shipped. At no stage did the Ambon revolt spill over into islands beyond the Moluccas.

. . .

The retreating Dutch survivors of the Beetjes expedition, on arrival at Fort Zeelandia on Haruku, rejoined the fifty men left behind on the way down and the reinforcements which had arrived there in the meantime, thirty men who had arrived there on 22 May. The British ship "Swallow" under Captain Wilson had brought two fieldguns from Ambon to replace the rotting mountings of the Zeelandia's guns[43]. This too must not be seen as widening the dispute any further by involving Britain. The several British ships that were involved in the various expeditions were simply hired by the Dutch. They were privately-owned vessels and all transactions were between the individual masters and the Dutch government, and as will be seen below, the masters earned for themselves the stern disapproval of the Bengal government.

Further reinforcements arrived at "Zeelandia" on 22 May, bringing the total strength of the garrison to 106 men.

The British cruiser "Nautilus" now arrived in Ambon, on its way from Ternate to Bengal to take back Ternate's British Resident Mackenzie. The Moluccan Commissioners requested the Captain of the "Nautilus", Commander Hepburn, to assist in putting down the revolt, the more so "since the rebellion is fought under the British flag and one might reasonably have expected that they would have seen this as an affront to their flag, which they would have revenged"[44].

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[43] Ver Huell. Vol. I, pp. 181-188.

[44] Engelhard Letter to Batavia dated 12 June 1817. Schneither Archief, Rijksarchief, The Hague.

But Mackenzie refused pointblank, and indicated that even the involvement of Captain Wilson of the "Swallow" did not meet with his approval and that the master "would have to justify his actions to his government and that his ship might very well be confiscated", since he had fought against a people with whom the British "had had the friendliest of relations only days ago and who had done no harm to them"[45]. A later complaint about this refusal, to the Bengal Governor-General, elicited the terse reply that individual commanders were certainly not authorised to use government ships for purposes for which they were not intended, and that the Bengal government was seriously disturbed that British civilian merchant vessels had aided the Moluccan Commission in its war with the rebels[46]. This refusal of the British to render assistance against the rebels, was, it should be noted, in direct contradiction to the policy the Bengal government had laid down in an exchange of correspondence between the (British) Government of Batavia[47] and the Governor General in Council at Fort William[48] in 1816, regarding the implications of the London Treaty of 13 August, 1814. In their reply to points raised by the Batavia Government, Bengal wrote:

> "Para 15. The questions discussed in the preceding paragraphs comprehend all those classed under the political branch. The financial questions, as already stated, will form the subject of a special

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[45] V.d.Kemp Bijdragen Vol. 65 (1911) p.641.

[46] ibid p.642.

[47] Letter from The Government of Batavia to Earl Moira, Governor General in Council, 15 March 1816.

[48] Letter from Governor in Council, Fort William to Charles Assey Esq., Secretary to the Government of Batavia, 18 May 1816. (I.O.L. & R.)

> dispatch. I therefore proceed to the only remaining point, which, although partly of a military nature, must be determined mainly by political considerations. The question is whether in the event of the native princes refusing to admit the Dutch, the British government are warranted (and if so, to what extent) to compel them to do so.
> Para 16. On this subject I am directed to observe that, if there were to be any opposition made by the natives to the entrance of the Dutch, we should be bound to suppress it, as we are engaged to put them in possession."

. . .

On Haruku large numbers of rebels had now assembled and on 30 May an attack was launched on Fort Zeelandia by a force of 600, but the grape shot of the field guns caused such heavy casualties that the rebels soon retreated[49].

Ver Huell reports that the next day "an Indian"[50] was caught assessing the strength of the fort. When threatened with torture, he revealed that a mass attack was planned for 2 June, with a force of two thousand men, attacking from five points at once. This news was immediately conveyed to Governor Middelkoop who sent another two hundred men reinforcement. The attack came one day late. The Fort was attacked at a number of points, but the swords and spears that most of the rebels were armed with were no match for the fieldguns and once more they had to fall back. Several small attacks took place during the next few days but the fort held. During the revolt the British flag was flown at various points of Haruku island, possibly with the aim of winning over Captain Wilson of the "Swallow", the

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[49] Ver Huell Vol. II, pp. 142-144.

[50] In that period Indonesians were at times referred to as "Indians".

British transport hired by the Commission, but that had not prevented Captain Wilson from flying the Dutch flag during the fight and firing grapeshot at the rebels[51].

The "Porto Report" describes Thomas Matulesia's anger at the unfavourable reports that reached him from Haruku. He had not personally taken command of the fighting there, but had sent his sabre with the rebels as a "jimat" or good luck token[52].

> "On 16 June people from Hoelalioe, the Raja of Oma, the schoolmaster and five people from Haruka came to inform Matulesia that the old Raja Aboro had wished to surrender but that the enemy had shot him. Matulesia kicked these messengers and the villagers of Haria beat them with rifle butts and one of them was beaten to death. On the 18th the people brought a peace letter to the village hall[53] of Haria and gave it to Matulesia who threw it on the floor. The people of Latau and Iha also sent letters but Matulesia burned them or tore them up"[54].

No further mention is made in the Porto Report about the fighting on Haruku and there is a gap in it from 26 June to 21 July.

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Matulesia, who had proved himself a good field commander, realised that with his victory over Fort Duurstede the revolution had not ended. He started to build fortifications along those roads on Saparua which were likely to be used by Dutch troops. He had walls built of coral stone, "six feet high and four feet thick. Every thirty metres he

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[51] Journal Lt. H.P.M. 't Hoofd.

[52] Van Doren, pp. 34-35.

[53] Matulesia's Headquarters for most of the time.

[54] Porto Report.

built a traverse, a wall diagonally across from one of the parallel walls, leaving a narrow gap or gate at one end, and at the other end in the next one. This forced anyone advancing to criss-cross between the traverses being continuously exposed to enemy fire from the next traverse"[55].

. . .

The Moluccan Commission decided that immediate further action against Saparua was out of the question. More armed vessels were needed, and it was most important to hold on to that which had not yet been lost, Haruku and Ambon itself.

The total professional military force on Ambon and the Uliasan Islands now numbered only fifty five artillerymen, 55 European and 250 native foot soldiers; a precarious situation, especially for Ambon, where precautions had to be taken before anywhere else.

The Burgers were now called up and placed under the command of the Magistrate, an ex-naval officer. This gave a corps of 800 men of whom only 300 had rifles; the rest had pikes. The Governor also called for volunteers who, if required, were to serve in Ambon's Fort Victoria. This gave another corps of 250 to 300 men, drawn from the ranks of the junior civil servants and the sons of the notables. 100 of these had rifles; the remainder were trained to man the fort's guns. A third corps was a kind of home-guard drawn from the negory population. Finally there was a small remnant of

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[55] Ver Huell Vol. I. p.249.

Bengalis left over from the British era, of which a small corps of 40 men, on foot and mounted, was formed for police duties; they were to patrol the town and, it was hoped, quell any attempt at rebellion immediately[56].

The Sultans of Ternate and Tidore also offered their help to the Commission, but Van Middelkoop felt that they were not to be trusted. The reason why they came down on the side of the Company is partly to be found in a succession crisis in these islands in which the Sultan of Ternate looked for the support of the government; also important was the fact that they had received an annual payment going back to 1650 as a compensation for the spice income they lost when the Company established its monopoly in the Ambon group and destroyed all clove trees in the rest of the Moluccas, including Ternate and Tidore. Buyskes, a few months later, made grateful use of the offered support.

The Raja Eti, King of the Mountain Alfurs of Ceram, came with a large vessel to offer his help against the rebels. There was always trouble between the South Coast Cerammers and the Mountain Alfur and the fact that the former had joined in Matulesia's revolt was probably enough reason for Raja Eti to take the other side. However, here too, Van Middelkoop did not consider it prudent to trust a chief of these "primitive" tribes.

The news of the rebel victory in Saparua was spread by Matulesia's messengers to the other islands in the Ambon group, in the obvious hope that they too would now openly revolt and thus force the Dutch to spread their forces. In Leitimor everything remained quiet but on the Hitu peninsula

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[56] Bijdragen Vol. 65 (1911) p.630.

trouble erupted in several places. As far as manpower would allow, reinforcements were sent to the Pass of Bagoeala, Hila, Hitu Lamah and Liang. At Hila the Resident and Commander of the Forces was killed, but the rebels were repulsed. Prisoners were hanged, without trial, from the nearest tree.

The Head of the Islamic Hituese rebels was the 80-year old Raja Oeloehapa, a descendant from a family that had traditionally resisted the Dutch since the sixteenth century and who had also been involved in the attempted "Royalist Coup" in 1796[57]. Being too feeble to walk he had himself carried into battle in a sedan chair from which he gave his orders and encouraged his men.

To safeguard Hitu and stop its contact with Ceram as much as possible, private boats were hired and armed. Liang on Hitu's north coast fell to the rebels, albeit at a heavy cost in lives. Ambon immediately sent reinforcements to Wai, south of Liang, to attempt the retaking of this place. If the commander considered his force of 51 men too small for this purpose the detachment at Bagoeala was to be added. Hila, however, remained a tributary of the rebels and under Matulesia's sway. The most that could be achieved was to ensure that no further reinforcements for the rebels could be brought in from Ceram. Once Matulesia was captured and the revolt in Saparua had been successfully quelled with the fresh forces brought in by Buyskes, the Hituese negories gradually surrendered to government forces.

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[57] See p.35.

On 25 June H.M. "Reygersbergen", commanded by Commander Groot, sailed into Ambon Bay and was immediately made ready for an expedition to Saparua. She was to be accompanied by the "Iris", the "Swallow" and the "Dispatch", another British ship, under Captain Crozier, that, to the annoyance of the Bengal government, actively assisted in putting down the revolt[58]. The flotilla was ready to sail on 24 June. Its orders were, according to Van Doren[59], "to punish the inhabitants who had taken part in the revolt", but Engelhart in his Batavia Report asserted that it sailed: "in order to enter into dialogue with the natives"[60].

Besides its crew the "Reygersbergen" carried twenty-four armed and 12 unarmed burgers, the latter to act as rowers for the orembaais. Some of these proved later to be unreliable.

The first goal of the expedition was not, as might be expected, the capital of the island but the Hatawano district in North-east Saparua. There, a group of five negories was to be found, and it was hoped that an attack here would cause a diversion and prevent the rebels from using their combined might at Saparua[61]. This seems rather strange, since Saparua was in the hands of the rebels and at that time the government forces were not launching an attack on that town. It is, however, certain that an attack on Hatawano had been planned.

Fire was opened with the ships' guns but little

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[58] Captain Crozier's motives were simply that, as an independent skipper, he could hire his ship to anyone who offered him a reasonable price.

[59] Van Doren. pp. 45-46.

[60] Engelhard, Batavia Report.

[61] Van Doren, passim. Boelen, passim.

damage was done since the projectiles went right through the bamboo houses, merely tearing a hole in the woven bamboo walls. It was decided that this was a waste of powder and shot. Only sporadic rounds were fired after that, just enough to keep the rebels apprehensive. The rebels remained defiant and calls came from the beach to "Come on Hollanders and Ambonese burgers, come ashore to take what we have for you and bring your Captain to take the place of Major Beetjes"[62].

The Commander of the flotilla now attempted negotiations. The white flag was hoisted on all ships and a barge was sent ashore with a Proclamation that was left on the beach, tied to a white flag. Free conduct was offered to a delegation of the villages. That night the ships were hailed from the shore and an extension of time was requested; the letter could not be answered until Monday as the Proclamation would be read from the pulpit in all churches on the Sunday.

On the Sunday morning a letter attached to a white flag was left on the beach. It contained a request for the captain to come ashore as the villagers had no boats to come to the ships. Lieutenant Ellinghuizen together with Lieutenant Christiaansen, who was a retired pilot and spoke Malay fluently, went ashore. A table and some chairs were placed on the beach and the negotiations started. The village Heads gave them the following list of grievances:[63]

1. That they had been hindered in the exercise of their religion by the Dutch government.
2. That they could not be content with the paper money introduced by the Dutch since they could not care for the poor with it. Paper money

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[62] Ver Huell, Vol. I, p.174.

[63] Boelen, p.42.

could not be placed in the poor box since adat required it to be hard cash.

3. That, after putting paper money into circulation the Resident had refused to accept it for payment at the government stores but had demanded silver specie for all payments.
4. That the Resident had threatened, if they refused, to lock them in chains and send them to Batavia, but if they paid with silver money, that would not happen.
5. That the Resident had demanded that burgers and villagers hand in their Burger patents and then refused to return them unless they paid fifty Spanish Dollars (about One hundred and twenty five guilders).
6. That they had to deliver locally made salt and dried meat (dendeng) without payment.
7. That all labour and supplies of materials, which in the past had been paid for by the Dutch and the English alike, were now demanded without payment.[64]

The representatives of the Commander then asked what their conditions were for a return to peace. The Heads replied that they wanted two preachers from Batavia for their religious services.

This agreed to, it was decided that the white flags would be kept flying until their grievances had been brought to the notice of the Governor.

Later that morning a request came from the five negories to send Christiaansen to Saparua to negotiate with Matulesia. Christiaansen was willing to go and departed that afternoon for the west coast of the island, travelling overland to Saparua. From there a letter arrived, signed by the rebels and Christiaansen, saying that the people were strongly inclined to make peace and that the next day an officer and a cadet should come to the capital. The Commandant now sent one of his officers, Lt. Boelen, to Ambon to confer with the governor. The rebels, becoming

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[64] The seven points are here merely given as presented. They are analysed and assessed in Chapter IV together with the 14 points set out in a statement of Matulesia which in essence cover the same grievances.

impatient, wrote a number of letters to the Commandant who was stalling for time, but, at the rebels' renewed request, he sent Ensign Feldman to Saparua to negotiate with the leaders of the revolt.

On the 18th, realising that he could stall no more, the Commander sent a letter to the rebels indicating that he would come ashore to negotiate and that he would expect Lt. Christiaansen and Ensign Feldman to be there.

Feldman meanwhile had reached Saparua where he was met by an estimated six hundred armed rebels, led by Matulesia. At Matulesia's command they all aimed their weapons at Feldman while he was being interrogated by him. Several times Matulesia jumped up and ran his sword across Feldman's neck, asking him if he should kill him. He then had Feldman tied to the tail of his (Matulesia's) horse and rode to his mother's house, about one hour's distance from Saparua. The old women looked at Feldman pityingly but did not speak. When asked about his parents, Feldman mentioned that his father was a Minister of the Church and then his treatment improved. The rebels told him that they would like his father to come to Saparua as their Resident and he was to write this to him. On the 19th he was sent back to Hatawano after promising Matulesia to pass his requests on to the Commander to send him a black silken waistcoat and some gunpowder[65].

Feldman came back on board the "Reygersbergen" in the morning of the 19th, but Christiaansen, who according to Feldman had had a very bad time of it, was not allowed to

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[65] Ver Huell Vol. I pp. 181-188.

return to the ship by the villagers and was kept on the beach.

At 2 p.m. that day Commander Groot himself went ashore to negotiate. Seeing that he knew what had happened to his envoys, Groot's conduct seems strange. Perhaps it was a case of not wanting to leave Christiaansen to his fate, perhaps he genuinely thought that this latest display of dare-devilry would achieve results.

The village-heads were dressed in their best black frock coats and received the delegation with all signs of respect. When asked by Groot why they waged war against the government they replied it was because of religion. Seeing armed men converge on the meeting place and observing that several Regents tried to leave the conference surreptitiously, the Commander gave orders to return to the ship at once. They just made the barge before the armed mob reached them[66]. At that moment Matulesia appeared. By his orders the rebels were to attack the Dutch party the moment he appeared and to deliver them to him dead or alive. Only the British Captain Crozier, who was acting as interpreter, had to be spared since the British were seen as allies[67].

On the morning of 21 July a landing party set fire to the negory houses including the house of the local Raja and the church; the prahus and larger boats met the same fate. The entire negory consisted of about twenty houses. Why all this force was used and the village burned down is hard to explain; it was done on the Governor's orders and

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[66] Ship's Journal H.M. "Reygersbergen", 18 July, 1817. Rijksarchief, The Hague.

[67] Ver Heull p.190.

so seems to demonstrate again the complete unsuitability of the Ambon government both in matters civil and military.

The "Reygersbergen" sailed for Saparua on 31 July. The "Iris" had sailed a couple of days earlier with orders to cruise a few days in the Banda sea to intercept any weapon and ammunition shipment from islands like Flores and Soembawa, after which she was to rendevous with the "Reygersbergen", the "Maria" and the "Dispatch" off Saparua[68].

While cruising off Nusa Laut, the "Iris" was hailed by a prahu flying the Dutch flag and carrying the Patti of that island, who reported that the inhabitants of all the seven negories there were loyal to the government[69] and that he had been sent to ask for assistance against the rebels who were on the island and against the violence of Kapitan Lucas[70]. This Lucas was the same person known as Thomas Matulesia. The Patti reported that this Kapitan Lucas now ruled over the islands Saparua, Haruku and Nusa Laut and on his orders the Rajas had no more authority with the people. He (Lucas) was prepared to make peace with the Dutch government and would be prepared to tolerate a Resident, as long as that functionary came under his authority.

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[68] Ship's Journal "Reygersbergen" 21 July, 1817.

[69] Nusa Laut, the smallest island in the Uliasan group had always been the least troublesome and most peace-loving one. Its inhabitants had been coerced into participating in the revolt, but their co-operation was less than enthusiastic, to the annoyance of Matulesia. It was as a punishment for their lack of zeal that they were forced to bury the dead of the Beetjes expedition.

[70] The writer has not been able to find any reason why Matulesia is here referred to as "Lucas".

The Patti who had been at the parley on the beach of Hatawano on the 19th also gave information about Fort Duurstede, which, he said, had been ringed with man traps and pitfalls; all its guns had been spiked and all gates had been fastened with steel bands. He further reported that on Saparua, too, the bulk of the villagers preferred the Dutch government, but were too much under the influence of Kapitan Lucas to dare say so for fear of having their heads cut off.

. . .

On 1 August the flotilla which had operated at Hatawano sailed south to commence the attack on Fort Duurstede and Saparua town. For particulars of the action of the next few days, the author will draw heavily on the Ship's Journal of H.M. "Reygersbergen", Commander Groot[71].

On 3 August, at 5.30 a.m., the landing force took to the boats, while at the same time the heavy ship's guns opened fire on the Fort. Resistance was minimal and by 6 a.m. the Dutch flag flew again over the Fort. In spite of the information given by the Patti of Nusa Laut, Fort Duurstede was in fact found to be unmanned. Matulesia had probably decided that once the Dutch warships had laid siege to the Fort, with their heavy naval guns against which the rebels had no means of reply, his men would be trapped in the Fort and unable to participate in any further fighting. Inside the Fort all guns were spiked and a quantity of bullets was found[72]. During the day the Fort was readied for defence. Guns were brought from the ships

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[71] Journal Groot. Rijksarchief, The Hague.

[72] Boelen p.264 also describes in some detail some of the gruesome finds in the Fort, such as a bloody sock with a little child's foot still inside it.

and houses in the periphery, including the Resident's house, were burned down to clear the field of fire. Not much was seen of the rebels who had fled when the heavy guns opened with grape-shot.

The capture of Fort Duurstede was mostly a moral victory. The entire island was still in rebels' hands and only well armed parties could venture outside the fort. The only well that provided for the Fort as well as for the ships was a few yards outside the walls and at times it ran dry. It was also under constant sniper-fire by the rebels. The greatest strategic value in the occupation of the fort was the fact that it did tie down enemy forces, preventing further attacks like the one on Haruku on 3 June[73].

If Groot was to take strong action, he would need supplies of every description, but Ambon seemed to lack both the resources and the fortitude to manage affairs. After much delay the merchant ship "Anna" arrived with water and gunpowder but no cartridges, bullets or reinforcements. The villagers, meanwhile, during the dark of the night, had built coral stone fortifications close to the fort and as one side destroyed them, the other rebuilt. On Sunday 21 September, the rebels appeared with tables and chairs, dressed in black and called out to the fort that they wanted to hold a church service in the field. Fire from the fort soon persuaded them that it was seen as a ruse to lure the Christian Ambonese troops to join them.

Commander Groot, still hopeful of persuading the rebels to surrender, issued a Proclamation, many copies

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[73] See p.92.

of which were left in the field by the patrols. It advised the rebels to submit and thus avoid having their possessions and house burned or otherwise destroyed. It also offered a thousand guilder reward for Matulesia, dead or alive. The rebels' response was to hang a bundle of these Proclamations on a stake in front of the fort, showing their derision[74].

. . .

Although Ambon had received news of the revolt as early as 16 May, the Moluccan Commission had not informed the Commission General in Batavia until 2 June, in a letter sent by "Nautilus", which had sailed from Ambon on 9 June. No doubt they cherished the hope that they could put down the mutiny in a short time. The "Nautilus" was the British ship carrying Resident Mackenzie back to Bengal, the same ship the Commission had hoped would have been made available to fight the rebels. The news of the Moluccas, related to the Commission General by Mackenzie, only confirmed their loss of confidence in their Ambon Commissioners.

The Commission General sprang into action immediately. By Secret Decree of 24 June, 1817, it was decided that Buyskes, the Third Commissioner, was to sail to the Moluccas with reinforcements. The expeditions would be assembled in Sourabaya and leave at the earliest possible moment.

The next day the important Decree of 25 June, dealing with the strife that seemed to exist between the Ambon Commissioners, gave Buyskes authority to disband this

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[74] Boelen p.272.

Commission and assume responsibility for government himself, if he deemed it advisable. After their consultation with Mackenzie the Batavia Commission had little doubt that the blame for the disastrous events had to be placed to a large extent on the Moluccan Commissioners.

In a letter to Buyskes, who by this time had left for Sourabaya to supervise preparations for his expedition, they wrote on 28 June:

> "It seems certain that the Dutch officials lost sight of the need to treat the natives, especially the Christians, with gentleness and that, to preserve the peace, exactly the opposite actions should have been taken, than were in fact taken.
>
> It is therefore our belief that, where no immediate involvement (with the revolution) has taken place, one can not be too lenient.
>
> Those who participated in the revolt and the crimes that went with it, will most likely, out of fear for punishment, persevere, and measures commensurate with their behaviour must be taken; but since our aim is to reap profits from these possessions, force must be used wisely.
>
> We should not omit to mention that, in truth, the behaviour of the Commissioners who, as we understand it, live in enmity, appears to us to be highly undesirable and the fitness for office of Mr Van Middelkoop is extremely doubtful. His removal from office therefore seems advisable and we are satisfied to leave this matter to you"[75].

The troops Buyskes took with him to the Moluccas consisted of 250 men, both European and native, under the command of the youthful, 28 year old, Major Meyer[76]. Buyskes arrived at Ternate on 1 September, 1817, and discussed the renewal of contracts with the Sultans of Ternate and Tidore. The Sultan of Tidore, who had usurped the throne with the help of the British, had difficulties with his son the Sultan Mudah, pretender to the throne and with his subjects

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[75] Van der Kemp. Bijdragen Vol. 66 (1912) p.6.

[76] Ver Huell, Vol. I p.196.

in some districts, who refused to acknowledge his right to the throne. Buyskes adjudicated in the matter, convincing the Sultan Mudah to stay in Ternate until the government could rule in the matter. The Sultan of both Ternate and Tidore then "gave proof of their attachment to the Dutch government by placing twenty armed and manned kora-koras each at my disposal"[77]. Buyskes obviously had more faith in the Sultans than did Van Middelkoop two months earlier, a matter on which Buyskes does not comment. These kora-koras, from Ternate and Tidore were armed with swivel guns, and all able bodied men that were to be found were pressed into service, apparently much against their will. "So great was the fighting spirit of the Ternatese", writes one observer[78] "that some cried like children while others desperately tried to jump into the sea or to escape to the mountains". Unrelenting south winds prevented the ships' departure from Ternate until 12 September, and even then the contrary winds made progress so slow that the fleet did not reach Ambon till 1 October.

. . .

At the time of Buyskes' arrival, the state of affairs in the Moluccas was serious. All the negories of Saparua were in revolt. Fort Duurstede was in Dutch hands but so surrounded that fetching water from the well, only 25 paces from the walls, was a dangerous business. Of the negories

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[77] Buyskes Buitenzorg Report dated 25 September, 1818.

[78] Van Rees. Het Nederlandsch Indische Leger, Amsterdam (1859) p.89.

of Haruku only Samet and Haruka remained loyal, but many of even their inhabitants sympathized with the rebels. Nusa Laut was completely under the rebels' sway. The South Coast of Ceram also was sympathetic to the rebels' cause and had sent armed men to Saparua, Haruku and Hitu. Only the Leitimor peninsula of Ambon had remained loyal.

Buyskes' first action was the dismissal of Van Middelkoop and Engelhard on the grounds of incompetence and conduct which compromised them to the extent that the civil service could not have faith in their authority. In Van Middelkoop's case, incompetence had resulted in injudicious orders regarding the supply of timber, and the payment in paper money in areas where this could not be exchanged; both these actions were bound to lead to dissatisfaction in the population.

On 3 October Buyskes assumed control of government himself, but since, because of his military duties, he could not give it his full attention, he transferred Resident Nuys from Ternate to run the day-to-day business of government.

Buyskes was convinced that an enemy, attacked from two or more directions, can be considered defeated, especially if his discipline is weak. He made the restoration of peace in Ambon his first priority and when the twenty kora-koras from Ternate and Tidore arrived on 12 October, he was ready to deal with the rebels at Hitu peninsula.

On 10 October he had signed a Proclamation to the negories at Hitu's west coast from Wakasihoe to Hila,

urging surrender and granting an amnesty in principle[79]. The attack on Hitu on 12 October was made from the sea at Larike and Hila while at the same time a land force crossed over the mountains of Hitu from Laha and Baguala, but even before these actions had started, the negory heads of Seit and Lima travelled to Ambon to offer submission. They were, however, suspect since they had left their women and children behind and so they were kept in Ambon. In most negories the government troops, on their march, were met by delegations wanting to surrender, claiming that their negories had always really been loyal, but had been forced by the Raja Oeloepaha to take part in the revolt. The few skirmishes that did take place usually ended with the flight of the rebels, hotly pursued by the Ternatese Alfur auxiliaries who killed hundreds of them.

The victorious expedition was back in Ambon on 19 October. Their quick success restored confidence in the government and its military force. A number of negories, which had hesitated until then, came to offer submission. Spirits soared amongst the Ambon burgers who now were keen to fight the rebels. More than 300 volunteered and they were armed with weapons confiscated from the rebels.

Buyskes decided to lead the operation against Haruku and Saparua personally. The negories of Pilauw and Kailolo showed only weak resistance. Buyskes had given orders that Pilauw was not to be destroyed but, "to punish the rebels and at the same time satisfy the rapacious auxiliaries, a plunder of 24 hours was permitted". The

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[79] Van Doren, op.cit. p.75.

Proclamation had reached the mountains and now hundreds of villagers returned. All rebels were locked up in the church and it was felt that an example had to be set. Twenty one leaders, including the aged schoolmaster, were picked out and led to the church square where they got orders to kneel and say their prayers, after which they were executed. Was this punishment legal? Was it useful? Much discussion took place later regarding its legality. On the matter of its usefulness some have argued that the shooting was a salutary warning but others felt that all it did was to strengthen the resolve of the rebels. In the light of what happens in our twentieth century, we should perhaps be careful with our judgement. Ver Huell's comment is worth recording:

> "It is certain that this punishment had a strong influence on all the people who were still rebellious and it has saved much blood, since the idea of surrender now took stronger root. It was therefore essential that a severe example was set; and as strict justice was observed, they became convinced that this war was not waged against them out of bloodthirst, but to bring them back from their erring ways"[80].

Ver Huell obviously tried to extenuate the executions but he is hardly convincing. It must be remembered that the promise of an amnesty had been given in such wide terms that, on the strength of it, people had returned from the forests or mountains to surrender. Where Ver Huell argues that the punishment had a strong influence for the good and saved a lot of bloodspilling since "the idea of surrender now took stronger roots", Van Rees[81] reasons: "They no longer trusted promises of pardon and did not dare leave the forest". The

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[80] Ver Huell, p.220.

[81] Van Rees, p.138.

tenacious defence of Saparua, discussed later in this chapter, seems to justify Van Rees's opinion much more than Ver Huell's.

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In the second half of October Buyskes ordered the "Evertsen", Commander Ver Huell, to Saparua and although the distance was only 15 miles it took the ship fully two days to get there, owing to the monsoon. Commander Groot and the "Reygersbergen" were still anchored off Fort Duurstede, which was now commanded by Captain Lisnet.

The rebels meanwhile got more and more daring and their numbers increased steadily. Their fortifications of coralstone came ever closer to the fort and the negory of Tiouw, a little inland from Duurstede, could be seen to have been well strengthened with stone parapets. The nature of the coral stone was such that it stopped and smothered bullets while the walls remained intact, making it useless to squander powder and bullets on them from the heavy ship's guns.

Buyskes now decided to attack from two sides forcing the rebels to divide their forces[82]. The attacks were to come from Duurstede, already in government's hands, and from Porto and Haria, where a landing was made without much resistance. In the fighting both these negories were burned down. Both government detachments now pushed on to Tiouw. It was a difficult march, the road was a narrow

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[82] Journal Groot and Ver Huell passim.

track with heavy bush on both sides, giving excellent cover for rebel snipers. Also the Alfur auxiliaries slowed the march down. They were used to fight from ambush positions and did not want to go forward. Once troops got to Tiouw and attacked from two sides, the negories of Tiouw and Saparua, the strong fortifications not withstanding, were in government hands by 8 a.m.

Meyer[83] gives a description of the fortifications of the negories: "One cannot wonder enough at the construction of the enemy's defences; walls of coral stone 12 to 14 feet thick and 15 feet high, buttressed on both sides with heavy beams which could not be penetrated by thirty pounders".

Another matter that amazed and dismayed the Dutch was the fact that the rebels considered their revolt almost as a Holy War. As we have shown the Church-minded Ambonese had always considered State and Church as one entity. Interference with religion meant that the government was disloyal to the church of God and therefore they would no longer be bound to obey the temporal ruler who had broken faith. Proof of this may be seen in the fact that Lt. 't Hoofd[84], in the Church of Saparua, had found the Bible opened at Psalm 17:

> "Hear a just cause, O Lord,
> Hide me in the shadow of thy wings
> From the wicked who despoils me
> My deadly enemy who surrounds me
> Deliver my life from the wicked by thy sword".

. . .

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[83] Meyer. "Kronijk" p.355.

[84] Journal 't Hoofd. Rijksarchief Inv. 2-21-4 No. 2.

On 10 November a forced march from Tiouw left early in the morning: four hundred men under Captain Krieger, plus 150 Ternatese Alfurs. Now, for the first time, the troops encountered the traverses built by Matulesia (see p.25) at Siri-Sori. At the same moment the Ternatese kora-kora fleet under their prince O Toessan, stormed the beaches and after surprisingly little resistance nine fortifications were taken and Siri-Sori was in their hands.

In front of the church the troops found a table, set with four glasses and a bottle of wine. Ver Huell assumed that the chief rebel had started a leisurely breakfast, not expecting his stronghold to be taken so rapidly. This seems rather unlikely and a more logical explanation would be that the set table was meant as a gesture of friendship and submission.

The only real opposition was met at the negories of Oelat and Ow. A reconnoitering party of sixty men reported that the enemy was numerous, had strong fortifications and was well supplied with fire-arms. Major Meyer, the officer commanding, did not want to attack immediately because he had sent several detachments into the mountains to spread proclamations and arrest fugitive Heads, and his forces were thus depleted. Although he deemed it wiser to await the return of these detachments, he allowed his mind to be changed by his second in command, Captain Krieger. Krieger and probably Meyer himself felt that the report of such a strong force at Oelat and Ow was probably exaggerated and advanced on the negories with a force that had been reduced to 118 men[85]. Due to a shortage of ammunition the order

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[85] Buyskes Buitenzorg Report.

was given for a bayonet charge. Despite the fact that all officers were wounded in the charge (Major Meyer was to die of his wounds some weeks layer) eight stone and log bulwarks were taken. But when the force entered Ow, which lies at the foot of a steep mountain, they found themselves surrounded by enemy fire. The Javanese soldiers faltered and only the threat of fire from their own troops induced them to stand firm. The enemy force numbered several thousands. Meyer's troops, in the shelter of the conquered bulwarks, held their ground and during the night received reinforcement of a hundred man strong naval detachment from Tiouw. This force held out till midday the next day when further reinforcements in the form of three Ternatese kora-koras arrived. The enemy now fell back and the negory was taken. The rebels had fought bravely, inspired, not by the Rajah of the negory, Paulus Triago, but by his sixteen-year-old daughter Christina Martha. She had helped with the building of the fortifications and, when the ammunition ran out, she was the first to throw stones at the troops. In the end she was dragged, half suffocated, out of the burning house, still clutching a spear in her hand. This was the end of the resistance.

. . .

As long as his star was rising, the rebel leader Thomas Matulesia lived in style, first in the Resident's house in Saparua and then in a house in Haria. He granted his wife the title of "Princess of Saparua". He had a great number of servants and from time to time he invited

the Regents to dinner. On the other hand he saw to it that the negories he had subjected, or which had chosen his side, remained orderly. The daily work went on as usual and the Sundays were dedicated to religion. Unreliable Regents were dismissed and lax ones were punished. He rejected a proposition to destroy the clove culture; in fact he did all in his power to promote it.

A circular dated 29 September 1817 shows how firmly Pattimura kept a hand on the Christian faith:

> "To all regents of the island of Ceram. In the first place: I hereby instruct you all, rajas, pattis, orang kajas, that you see to it, as far as possible, that all Christians, be they members of the community or not, both men and women, continue to live in peace such as we have been used to, and that you continue to further the interests of our Christians in accordance with the commandments of the Almighty who is in heaven. This must be done by going to Church on Sundays and attending the gatherings during the week. Let no one be careless about keeping God's commandments - so that we may gain strength and encouragement in this war which must serve to improve our lot and that of our country.
>
> Secondly, you must see to it that the children go to school. According to our custom, all mothers and fathers must entrust their children into the teacher's care, so that they can be taught the word of God as becomes a Christian, for the glory of our country, in accordance with God's holy will. Furthermore, if any of you does not fulfil this instruction, he will be sentenced and punished, he will be killed and all his family with him".

Matulesia, it is clear, saw himself as a guardian of the Christian faith which he felt was threatened by the government. He did not, however, regard himself as a prophet, still less as a messiah. He remained a staunch Calvinist to the end.

After the fall of Siri-Sori, the Raja of Boi, a negory across the bay from Siri-Sori, approached the Dutch commander, offering to deliver Matulesia to him, provided he was given some troops to accompany him. The Raja of

Boi had been deposed by Matulesia. The Dutch were at this point only too willing to make use of the internal dissension amidst the Ambonese. Lt. Pietersen, an Ambonese officer, with forty men in two orembaais was sent with the Raja. He entered a house pointed out to him and indeed did find Matulesia "dejected and not knowing what to do next"[86]. Pietersen advised Matulesia to surrender and when the latter hesitated he was taken prisoner by the Raja of Boi. Once on board the "Evertsen" Matulesia refused to say very much and when the Ternatese Prince O Toessan asked him how he could have been so rash as to make war on a body as powerful as the "Company" he remained silent "but looked at the Prince with eyes full of loathing"[87].

At the request of Major Meyer the order was given to burn all the boats belonging to the rebels. On landing on the beach of Paparoe to burn an orembaai, the owner, an old villager pleaded with the soldiers not to destroy his sole means of existence, in return for which he would show them the hideout of Latumahina, the third in command of the rebels. Latumahina was arrested without any resistance. Two other important rebel leaders, Anthony Rhebok and Thomas Pattiwael, were also arrested, but the author has not been able to find any particulars or dates.

Ver Huell who had been informed that the child of the Resident Van den Berg was still alive, having been looked after by one Solomon Pattiwael and his wife, sent out patrols to locate the child, without luck, but on 12 November a band

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[86] Boelen, op.cit. p.280.

[87] Van der Kemp, Bijdragen Vol. 66 (1911) p.71.

of rebels came to surrender and brought the boy with them. He was in reasonable health and was in due course handed over by Ver Huell to his grandparents in Sourabaya.

. . .

The Raja Triago was sentenced to death, despite the pleadings of his daughter Christina Martha, and executed on Nusa Laut. The girl, on account of her youth, was set free and given in the care of the schoolmaster of Nusa Laut. After the execution of the chief rebels at Ambon (see p. 119) the lesser rebels were banished to Java and placed aboard the "Evertsen". To Ver Heull's surprise the girl Christina Martha was among them.

"The heroic girl" he wrote, "had escaped from the care of the schoolmaster and had taken to roaming alone in the forest, living on wild fruit. Soon her fellow countrymen, steeped in superstition, saw her as a witch or Sawah (an evil spirit), and the Commissioner had decided that she should not stay there"[88].

When Ver Huell's ship left for Java he received orders to take the girl there, where she could be properly cared for. But she had lost the will to live, pined away and died before the ship reached port. She was buried at sea.

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[88] Ver Huell, p.271.

De S. bij N. Comm: Gen: over N. I:

N: 130.

Gezien hebbende een vonnis uitgesproken door den Raad van Just. Ritie der Molukkos alhier residerende op den 12e dezer tegenden persoon van Thomas Matulessie van Maria als overtuigd te zijn geweest het opperhoofd en aanvoerder der Muitelingen en moordenaard op de Eilanden Saparoua, Haroukou, Neusalaut, Seram en de Negerijen van Seith en Lima.—

En in aanmerking nemende dat het voor de openbare Rust- en veiligheid noodzakelijk is dat een voorbeeld van gestrenge Straf op het aanvoeren van Muitelingen worde gesteld.—

Heeft noodig geoordeeld voornd vonnis bij deze goede te keuren en te gelasten dat het zelve zal worden uitgevoerd zoo als het bij dezer Hoofdplaats gebruikelijk is.

Fort Cornelis 13 December 1817.

De S. bij N. voorn:
/get:/ A. A. Buyskes.

Confirmation of Matulesia's Death Sentence

On 21 November the "Evertsen" had reached Ambon and her prisoners were transferred to the jail. They were tried in the Court of Justice and sentenced to be hanged. The execution of the four chief rebels took place on the square in front of the Fort Victoria.

On the evening of 15 December, Ver Huell visited the prisoners, a visit he recorded as follows:[89]

> "The Chief, Thomas Matulesia, was surrounded by schoolmasters to prepare himself for death by the continuous singing of psalms. He seemed calm, completely absorbed in the religious service and oblivious of his surroundings. The other mutineers were silent... At seven a.m. the rebels: Thomas Matulesia, Chief; Anthony Rhebok, Captain; Philip Latumahina, Lieutenant and the Raja of Siri-Sori, Sajat Printa were led out. The sentence of the Court of Justice was read. When Matulesia heard that his dead body would be hung in an iron cage, "as a deterrent for others", he looked up for a moment. After that he looked straight ahead. Latumahina was first. He was a heavy man and the rope broke. Half dead he was hoisted up the ladder again and was definitely hanged. Matulesia was the last. With firm steps he climbed the ladder. As the noose was placed round his neck he greeted the judges respectfully and said in a clear voice: "Slamat Tingal Tuan Tuan", a polite eastern greeting which, literally translated is: "Happy staying behind Gentlemen". He entered eternity like a gentleman. The corpses were taken to the outer-gallows and Matulesia's was hung in a long iron cage".

The other rebel leaders were banished to Java to work in the coffee plantations. A number of them were later allowed to return to Ambon.

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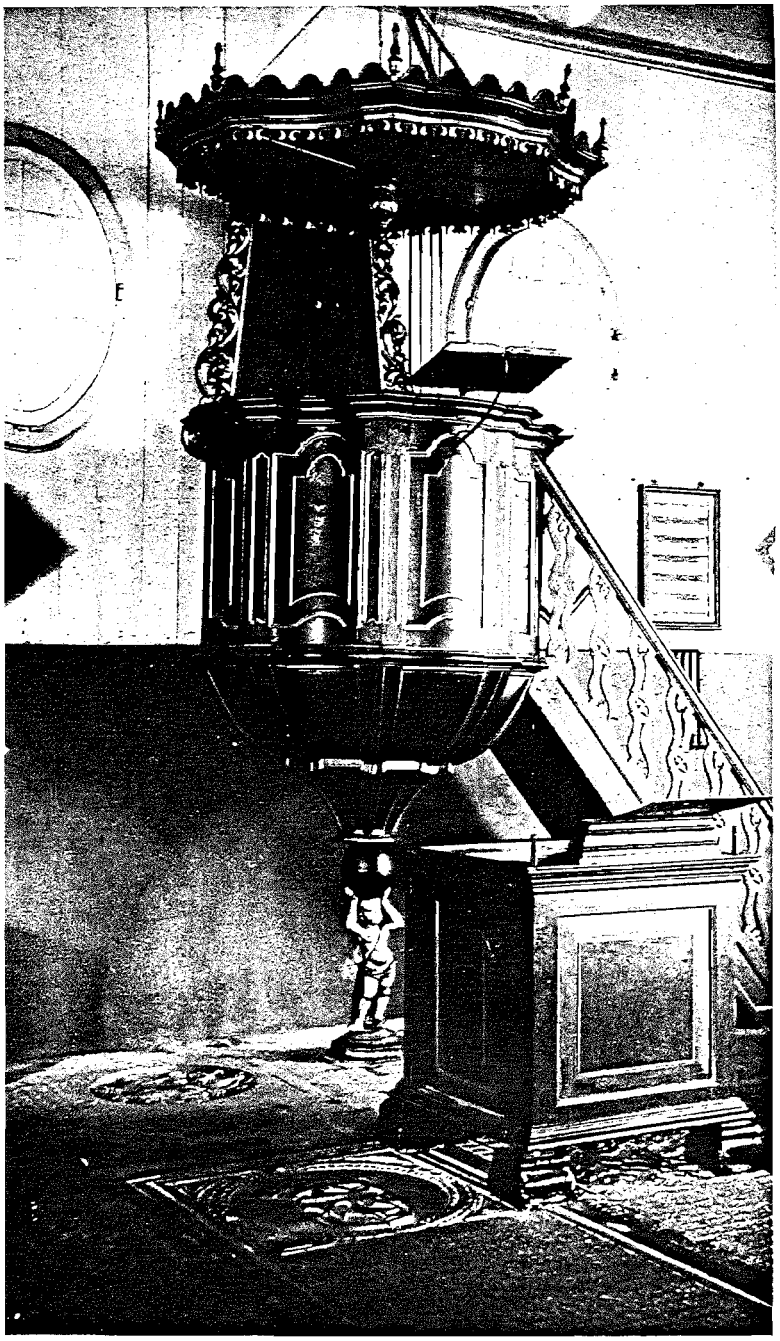
[89] ibid p.269.



Pulpit "Great Church" Ambon.

CHAPTER IV [1]

THE INQUEST

The revolt was over. Dutch rule had been re-established, but the Dutch still had to make their analyses of what had gone wrong. As we look at these contemporary analyses in some detail we may perhaps begin to formulate our own conclusions as to the immediate causes of the revolt.

We must remember all the time, of course, that most of our sources were provided by people with a direct interest, such as the Commissioners and the Rebel leaders, or are the Journals of naval officers who took part in the operations but who were often expressing personal opinions and/or hearsay when discussing causes. In the case of Ver Huell, his original Journals were lost with his ship in a shipwreck and rewritten from memory, two years later; in the case of Van Doren and J.Boelen, their accounts were written many years after the event, which must raise some doubts about their accuracy. We should perhaps be prepared to admit at this point the possibility that even after close investigation, we may not be able to say positively where the

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[1] In this chapter the immediate causes of the revolt will be scrutinized and in this connection a short chronology will perhaps be useful, since so much happened in so short a period:

8 March 1817:	Arrival of Dutch Commissioners in Ambon.
14 May 1817:	Start of the Revolt at Saparua.
20 May 1817:	Expedition under Major Beetjes annihilated.
1 October 1817:	Arrival of Buyskes.
16 November 1817:	Thanksgiving service in Saparua; end of the resistance.

direct causes of the revolution lay. Reports from the responsible authorities, including Engelhard's version, must, under the circumstances, be read with the utmost circumspection. But we are obliged, as historians, to make what we can of these reports.

Regarding the Commissioners, Van der Kemp does not seem far off the mark when he describes the Governor as "that stupid Van Middelkoop"[2] and Engelhard as "Ineffectual"[3]. To be sure, Van Middelkoop was not a man of strength, or gifted in the art of government; the takeover from the co-operative English Resident went well enough, but with Engelhard beside him, he was in no way capable of handling a revolt. A closer look, however, should be taken at the Moluccas of his day. With neither money nor the personnel, with only pen and paper and many good intentions, the Commissioners' aim was to make a model Dutch colony out of the carelessly ruled British administration. When, at the reintroduction of Dutch Rule, the new administrators tried to run their regime along the old lines, the result, in the always unruly Saparua, was immediate and fiery conflict - and under those circumstances neither of the Commissioners was in his right place.

While still in Ambon Engelhard wrote in a private letter[4] that the revolt was due to Van Middelkoop's orders[5],

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[2] P. V.d.Kemp, "Het Herstel van het Nederlandsch Gezag" Bijdragen Vol. 65 (1911) p.504.

[3] P. V.d.Kemp, Het Nederlandsch Bestuur in 1817 tot het Vertrek der Engelschen. The Hague. (1913) p.21.

[4] Letter from N.Engelhard to his brother-in-law, S.Van Basel, 12 June 1817. Rijks Archief, The Hague.

[5] "As for his part in the revolt of Saparua, which he now blames on the unfortunate Van den Berg, by accusing him of actions, for which he himself gave the orders and which he now prefers to negate, assuming that the Saparuan archives will by now be lost".

but in his Batavia Report he declares that the causes were "totally unknown" and that he was not able to throw any light on the matter "since communications with Saparua had ceased and communications with Ambon were at a complete standstill". Notwithstanding, he gives a lengthy opinion on the causes, seeking them in generalities: it is, he says, "the dislike of the Saparuans in general for all subservience and social contracts, being by nature inclined to an independent, self-opinionated, easy lifestyle, which inclination induces them to reject any acceptance of a regular government, and to the misguided expectation that they, like the people of Ceram and elsewhere, could stand on their own without being bound by any obligations"[6].

Even if it were ethnographically correct, such a state of affairs could hardly be said, by a responsible government, to be an "extenuating circumstances"; it is the function of that government to control such circumstances. The inhabitants of Saparua had long been known to be "difficult" and inclined to opposition. Buyskes acknowledges that "the independence of Ceram invited emulation since its inhabitants did not come under the immediate control of Dutch military forces or its civil servants and that therefore they could trade as and with whom they liked. The desire for independence and the advantages that came with it had long since been stirring in the inhabitants"[7].

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[6] Buyskes Report 472.

[7] Van Middelkoop's "Ambon Report" and "Sourabaya Report".

On 29 May 1817, at Saparua, Matulesia issued a manifesto listing fourteen points of contention. Rather than giving the full text of this elaborate document here, we will give a short resumé as follows:

1. Dutch authorities interfered with schools and religion.
2. Ambonese were forcibly recruited for Java.
3. Paper money was unacceptable.
4. No wages were paid for government work.
5. The government punish villagers who complained and fired guns at them.
6. Compulsory salt making was objected to.
7. The Resident increased taxes.
8. Buying off of labour duties at the expense of other villagers was objected to.
9. Complaints by villagers went unheeded.
10. Payment for mail transport to Ceram was too low.
11. Payment for mail deliveries to Ambon was too low.
12. Compulsory deliveries of dried fish were objected to.
13. Experiments with coffee and nutmeg cultivation were objected to.

The fourteenth point is given in full since it gives an indication of Matulesia's thinking:

> "14. The above matters have been reported in truth. If the Dutch government wishes to rule us then it must do so well and just, as the British did, who kept their promises; but regarding the Dutch government, if they do not govern us as they (the British) did then we will resist them in eternity. Furthermore, we, the Regents and the people have not chosen our above mentioned leader, but he has been appointed by the All High Himself".

This statement was signed by the twenty one regents of Saparua and Nusa Laut. It should be noted that among the signatories were Melojior Kesaulija, Patti of Siri-Sori Serani, and Sarassa Sanaki, Patti of Siri-Sori Islam. Of these two neighbouring negories, the first (Serani or Nasarani) was Christian and the second Muslim[8], which proves that, voluntarily or under coercion, the Muslims of Saparua sided with the Christians against the government.

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Van Middelkoop in both his defence reports[9] analyses the eight grievances embodied in Pattimura's fourteen points and the list of grievances given to Colonel Groot in Hatawano, and gives his version of the matters raised. These points are, he says:

1. the paper money
2. the order to make salt
3. the laying out of a nutmeg plantation
4. the cutting and supplying of timber, atap and gaba-gaba
5. the dismissal of schoolmasters and the order to send the Saparua children to school in the island's capital
6. the recruitment of Ambonese soldiers for service in Batavia
7. the supply of dried fish and dendeng
8. the compulsory delivery of coffee.

The questions that should be asked here are: Which of these grievances were seen by the people as the most serious? What was the opinion of the Rebel Leaders themselves?

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[8] cf. p.61.

[9] Middelkoop's Ambon Report and Sourabaya Report.

The grievances fall into two categories, economic and ethno-psychological. The first group comprises the compulsory supply of timber, atap, gaba-gaba, dried fish, dendeng and coffee; under the second heading come the questions of school, church and recruiting. We shall consider these eight points one by one:

I. THE PAPER MONEY

The "Publication" of the Commission General in Batavia of 14 January 1817 started pompously: "Just as His Majesty has given an unshakable base to the monetary conditions in the Netherlands, so has he ordered an equal right for the Netherlands Indies, guaranteeing a wide and continuous circulation of money". It states that two million guilders, in specie, had been sent with the Commission and that paper money would be issued, declaring that "the paper coin will never be issued or accepted at a value above or below its nominal value and always at equal value with the specie of which it is completely representative". In reality the paper money was unexchangable - there were only three Exchange Banks to be opened in the whole of the Moluccas, one each at Ambon, Ternate and Banda - and at the time the paper money was put into circulation these Banks had not yet been organised - another example of poor government. In 1810 the Dutch had left the Moluccas under a cloud, after issuing emergency paper money that had had to be kept in circulation by force, and now, seven years later, they started in a similar way.

By Decree No. 18, dated 10 April 1817, the Commission had directed that "All spice and other deliveries in the

Residencies resorting under Ambon will be paid entirely in hard cash on account of the difficulties the acceptance of paper money will entail for the inhabitants of these island, as no exchange-banks could be established there, necessitating a journey to Ambon every time they would be paid." This, says Van Middelkoop, meant that the inhabitants of those islands were favoured above those of Ambon itself, and he argues that therefore this could not possibly be a cause for revolt, "although there was an immediate dislike of the paper money, possibly for fear that it would in the long run be disadvantageous, as it had been in the past". "But", he continues, "this was the reaction of the well to do, not the indigent Ambonese, who probably were being used as a means to stop the introduction of the paper currency; the British had introduced the Spanish Dollar in 1811 and this was highly favoured"[10].

If Van Middelkoop's explanation does anything, it does prove the truth about the shortage of specie. As there were exchange offices only in Ambon, Ternate and Banda, paper could not be exchanged anywhere else. The government did not pay the inhabitant with paper money, but this applied only to payments for spices and other compulsory deliveries. In the same report we read that the Commissioners, to prevent the export of silver coins, "did not allow the exchange of silver coin during the first two months after the change over of the colony". To justify this, they refer to Banda where, "but for the timely intervention of the Resident, the entire stock of silver coins would have

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[10] Van Middelkoop's Sourabaya Report.

disappeared". "Being aware of the silver shortage in Java", he continues, "and the difficulty of obtaining the amount sent to this colony, I decided not to make silver available to everybody for their personal gain at the expense of the government, as this would have exhausted our silver coin holdings, which would have been exported to places from which not one stiver would have been returned to government establishments and this would surely have brought about the displeasure of Commissioners General (in Batavia). Moreover, it is not the common man who is interested in silver, he much prefers to be paid in doits, while his entire wealth seldom amounts to more than four or five rupees"[11]. But complaints are so general about this matter that it cannot be dismissed so lightly. The fault lay definitely with the Moluccan Commissioners and, indirectly, also with the Commission General in Batavia who were responsible for the paper issue and the unsatisfactory monetary system in general. Buyskes himself notes in his Report that "the payment in paper money created immediate dissatisfaction"; the people remembered what had happened in 1810 and now that the British were leaving "the people were again forced to accept payment in paper rather than specie"[12]. There seems, therefore, to be little doubt that the paper money question was a contributing factor to the general dissatisfaction that sparked the revolt.

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[11] ibid.

[12] Buyskes Buitenzorg Report.

II. THE MAKING OF SALT

Matulesia says in his fourteen points: "Also the Resident ordered us to make salt, which the government wished to sell; but from the earliest time till the present, we have never done this kind of work for the government; this is the reason for our dissatisfaction".

By Decree No. 30 dated 10 April 1817, Van Middelkoop had requested the Residents to investigate the possibility of constructing saltpans in their areas; for the same purpose he appointed a commission for the island of Ambon, which, "after having completed its investigation reported that even the most likely places were not suitable". The governor's request stressed that nothing should be left untried in an effort to eliminate the shortage of salt, of which none was available either from the British or from private sources; none had been imported from Java and such imports were unlikely in the near future. The Governor's request was therefore an attempt to see if the Moluccas could be made self sufficient in this commodity. Van Middelkoop could not see any grounds for complaints of the local people because the measure had been prompted by his concern for their welfare, because in that way they would "have an easy way to obtain salt at a much cheaper price than if they were obliged to buy imported salt at high prices; or to obtain it by burning old wood impregnated by seawater or driftwood"[13].

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[13] Van Middelkoop's Sourabaya Report ff. 35-36.

III. THE LAYING OUT OF A NUTMEG PLANTATION

Matulesia said: "We are hard pressed to take care of the clove and coffee plantations and yet we have been ordered to lay out nutmeg plantations, this makes our men and women, who have to do a lot of heavy work for the government, very bitter".

Van Middelkoop explains the nutmeg plantation as follows: He and Engelhard feared that the severe earthquakes of 1816 in Banda would have a long term effect on the nutmeg cultivation. In order to relieve the "disadvantages for the government and", he added somewhat grandly, "the inconvenience to humanity" the Commissioners had written to the Residents ordering them to lay out "trial nutmeg gardens". Saparua had started a plantation of 750 trees. Haruku had reported that their soil was unsuitable for nutmeg cultivation and Hila had not replied at all as yet. The Governor therefore, could not see any grounds for a revolt on account of the nutmeg policy, since "the population of this island is so large and suitable land is available so near to the fort, that the amount of labour involved is insignificant"[14]. It is notable that Van den Berg, both in the salt making project and in the matter of the nutmeg plantation was far more eager than most of his fellow officials; he clearly had not yet learned the 'festina lente' technique his colleagues in Hila and Haruku, both with many years of experience in the colonial service, were obviously adopting[15].

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[14] ibid.

[15] At the outbreak of the revolt neither Hila nor Haruku had taken any action as regards the salt but Van den Berg had already started experiments.

IV. DELIVERIES OF CUT TIMBER, ATAP AND GABA-GABA

This was taken to be one of the most serious of the grievances and certainly not unjustly so. Van Middelkoop mentions the dilapidated state of government buildings and adds: "In order to rectify this and also to proceed with the necessary repairs to government buildings in Banda, I issued a general requisition for timber from Saparua, Hila and Haruku in April last[16] but no timber has been received as yet. Some timber is available at Hila but a shortage of boats has, so far, made shipment impossible". The delivery quotas were to be spread over the various negories of Saparua, Hila and Haruku. Then follows his usual justification: "This demand for timber was no burden on the people since, compared with deliveries in earlier times, even under British rule, especially when they first arrived here, it was in no way excessive and had always been an obligation of the population which had been maintained by the British throughout their stay. For the felling and cutting a fair wage was paid as per my Decree 43 dated 13 April, especially since the timber was not theirs, but grew wild on government land".

It has been argued that this was contrary to adat law and a continuation of the theory of Raffles, who, through his exorbitantly high land rent, can be said to have turned the whole of Java into a tenant farm of the government[17].

Idema[18] quotes a price list for timber supplies:

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[16] Decree No. 39 dated 12 April, 1817.

[17] C. van Vollenhove. Het Adat Recht van Nederlandsch Indie. Leiden (1931), p.236.

[18] H.A.Idema. "De Oorzaken van den Opstand van Saparua in 1817" Bijdragen Vol. 79 (1923) pp. 598-618.

Beams 6" x 12' to 18'	Guilders	2.16
ditto under 6" x 8' to 12'	"	0.18
Planks 1½" x 12' to 18'	"	2.00
ditto under 1½"	"	0.18
Posts of Nany wood	"	2.00
etc.		

This is part of the list set by "Secret Order No. 36" of 12 April. (Why 'Secret' one may ask? One would have expected such a price list to be widely publicised.) As we saw, the method of payment was very involved and required the fiat of the Governor in Ambon, causing long delays, and after all that, payment was expected to be made in the despised paper money. These long delays were probably the reason for Matulesia's claim that no payments were received. It must also be kept in mind that the actual amount received was not the most important point: what really hurt was the seemingly endless demands for labour in order to supply all manner of requirements. The added enforced experiments, with salt making and the nutmeg plantation, would no doubt have added to the general dissatisfaction[19].

The timber deliveries, as we saw, provided the spark in the powder keg and the removal of the timber cargo from the orembaai at Porto by the rebels was the first act of defiance. Once the revolt had broken out, immediate improvements were made by Decree dated 24 May, giving Superintendents of Negories funds for immediate payment, in specie, for deliveries.

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[19] The workload for compulsory deliveries of timber often fell unfairly on villagers. It was, for instance, possible to buy off one's obligations on payment of a set fee. This, however, meant that the other villagers had to do the extra amount of work required to fill the unaltered quota.

Buyskes classified the orders for compulsory deliveries among the 'injudicious' orders of Van Middelkoop[20].

On 3 May the Resident of Saparua asked the Commissioners to inform him whether the rowers for the many orembaais required by the Government for the transport of goods, personnel or mail, should be paid a daily wage of four stivers per day per man, as had been the practice of the British government, considering that the previous Dutch government had made no such payment. The present author has not been able to find the Commissioners' reply. Perhaps this is the basis for Matulesia's complaints: "for the transport of mail to Ceram only four guilders is paid, for that to Ambon only two guilders, this is really too bad". In a Decree of the Commissioners dated 2 August 1817 - after the outbreak of the Saparua Revolt, it will be noted - the Commissioners had an obvious change of heart. "To all negory folk employed in government service on orembaais transporting goods, personnel or mail, will be paid five stivers daily and the usual rations when they have to leave the bay and go out to sea, but if they remain in the bay or on the island, only four stivers and no rations; on request part of this may, in their absence, be given to the wife or children for their subsistence"[21].

The following passage is also interesting:

> "The superintendent is seriously recommended to make sure that this burden is equally spread over the negory folk and that nobody, whose turn it is, is allowed to buy off this obligation, since this will create disconsolation in the others and may lead to Commotion, while he will also give his

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[20] Buyskes' Report 472.

[21] Decree No. 117 dated Ambon 2 Aug. 1817.

> attention and see to it that those who have given these services or delivered materials, will receive prompt payment in full; he will be accountable for any acts to the contrary"[22].

As regards the spirit of the government, it is obvious that the timber supplying negories were hard pressed, but there is no indication whatsoever that the Governor ever stood up for the interests of his people, against the countless requisitions of the Military. Again and again the Superintendents of Negories are ordered to supply this or that "by way of distribution over the negories". And a tremendous amount was required: poles for the navy wharf, big repairs to the Castle, the military hospital and the small post in Leitimor, even firewood for the newly arrived warships. Regular transport with the Bay of Baguala was also demanded, also by equal distribution over the negories. Two orembaais had to be available at the first request of the Military Commander - as the Decree puts it: "as under the previous Dutch govenerment, an obligation abolished by the British government as being unnecessary". Tidy Dutchmen that they were, a Decree of 19 April[23] ordered all roads in the town to be thoroughly repaired and the town cleaning was reorganised. By Decree of 25 April the police force, which had cost the British seven to eight thousand Spanish Dollars annually, was replaced by night watches of armed burgers, "as such an expense cannot be continued". Obviously Busykes' condemnation of these compulsory services as "injudicious" was a considerable understatement.

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[22] ibid.

[23] Decree No. 47 Ambon 19 April 1817.

V. THE DISMISSAL OF SCHOOLMASTER-PASTORS AND THE ORDER TO CONCENTRATE TEACHING OF SAPARUA CHILDREN IN THE ISLAND'S CAPITAL

Pattimura claimed that "the British respected our religion and therefore the people were obedient and lived in peace, but as soon as the Dutch came to rule us, all this was finished; for this reason the people became dissatisfied and rose against the government; this is why the people of Hunimua (another name for Saparua) and Nusa Laut no longer wanted to obey the government; but then the Resident became angry and has fired cannon and guns[24] and our hearts got sick and we began to oppose such a man". Here he is obviously referring to the period of government of Daendels, who, when faced by lack of funds, made payment of the schoolmasters' wages the responsibility of the negories; he is referring also to the reversal of this rule by the British as soon as they took over again in 1810, when the government again resumed responsibility for the financial support of the school-church system. However, the traditional school and church in each village - which gave the village its importance - had the obvious disadvantage of high costs and Jabez Carey, as school superintendent of schools from 1814 on, had begun to concentrate the pupils of the small schools in the Ambon district in one large central school in Ambon town. This had then led to discontent amongst the schoolmasters. This particular grievance therefore preceded the return of Dutch rule in 1817, but may well have

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[24] This directly contradicts the Porto Report which states that only on 15 May guns were fired in the attempt to relieve the Resident on the road between Haria and Fort Duurstede.

been re-introduced because of its sure emotional impact.

The Dutch Commissioners wanted to extend the system of concentration into larger schools to Saparua, partly because Van Middelkoop saw in this the chance of improving the teaching, especially the teaching of the Dutch language - which was seen as a means of increasing loyalty to the Dutch. But the main reason was, no doubt, the cost saving. But all that actually had been done was the sending of a letter by Van Middelkoop, asking advice from the Residents of Saparua and Haruku. Van Middelkoop reports[25] that no action had been taken. His original letter on the subject had been written on 9 April and on 15 April Van den Berg, the Saparua Resident, sent his advice, strongly rejecting the proposition, arguing that the complete school system would have perished if the British Government had not reinstated the payment of schoolmasters' wage, after the "French"[26] had made this the responsibility of the negories. "A change in this arrangement" Van den Berg wrote, "will do great harm as it will disrupt the entire school and church system"[27]. The Resident of Haruku reacted in the same way and the proposal was then dropped by Van Middelkoop. In a Report to the Commission General in Batavia dated 26 April - well before the outbreak of the revolt, it should be noted - the Commissioners in Ambon wrote that "among the Ambonese there is an apprehension of the likelihood that our government will again reduce and change the school and church

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[25] Van Middelkoop's Sourabaya Report.

[26] Obviously a reference to the fact that Daendels represented the Holland of Louis Bonaparte.

[27] Van Doren op.cit. p.106.

system". The grievance was unfounded, but the rumour had got around and the villagers believed it. The fact that the population was so upset by a mere investigation was therefore known to the Commissioners and should have made them very cautious in all other matters. After all, the Moluccan schoolmasters were rigidly puritanical in their outlook. Their position, in fact, invites some comparison with that of the Tuangku among the Padris who played an important role in the Islamic revival in Sumatra[28]. A local "nationalistic" sentiment figured as prominently among the schoolmasters as it did among the Padris.

The rumour that the government intended to centralise the schools, which would lead to the dismissal of a number of schoolmasters and a general dimunition of the influence of the Reformed Church in Moluccan society was a strongly contributing factor in the subsequent insurrection. Later it was found that, in an effort to get the added backing of the 10 per cent of the population of

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[28] The Padris (a term either derived from the Portuguese word Padre or from the town of Pedir in Sumatra, Men of Pediri or Padri) played an important role in Islamic revival in the Minangkabau region of Sumatra. They were members of an Islamic sect that had fallen under the influence of the puritanical Wahhabi movement, while making a pilgrimage to Mecca. They opposed polytheist and animist accretions of Islam and sought to introduce the strongly patriarchal norms of Islam among the matriarchal Minangkabau people and soon drove the conflict between Islam and adat into the open. The methods which the Padris adopted so aggravated the problem of adapting the customs of the Minangkahau to Islam, that the attempt ended in armed conflict and the murder of the entire Minangkabau royal family, with the exception of one fugitive. The Dutch authorities, mainly for reasons of conservatism, sided with the inland rulers, who, because of their high-handed actions, lost the confidence of their people. See S.Tas, Indonesia: The Underdeveloped Freedom. Pegasus, New York (1974) p.49. See also Christina Dobbin Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy, London 1984.

Saparua who were of the Muslim faith, the rumour had been spread that Muslims would be forced, by the government, to embrace Christianity. This of course made the religious unrest complete[29].

Matulesia, throughout his career as the leader of the rebellion, was surrounded by schoolmasters who acted as his principal advisers and go-betweens. Van Doren paints a vivid picture of the aged schoolmaster of Saparua, "a very orthodox follower of Protestantism" who, "bible in hand" always urged his fellow villagers on to further resistance[30].

VI. RECRUITMENT OF MILITARY PERSONNEL FOR BATAVIA

The Commission General in Batavia needed to extend its army in Java and was looking to the Moluccas for this purpose. Article 5 of the "Instruction to the Military Commander" ordered recruitment in the Moluccas of natives exclusively for service in Java. Engelhard felt that this would prove to be a difficult task because "the population is very much against it; the feat of military service is so great since earlier recruitment campaign actions that a renewed campaign in these islands would be sufficient to create great unrest under the population and lead to revolt"[31]. This term of the population did not apply to service in the Moluccas themselves and, with the very small army strength, it would seem to have been the sensible thing to restrict recruitment there to local service only.

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[29] Enklaar, op.cit. p.51.

[30] Van Doren, ibid.

[31] Engelhard Letter to S. Van Basel dated 12 June 1817.

The Residents of Saparua and Hila, especially, made very strong recommendations to this effect, no doubt prompted by the completely inadequate forces at their disposal. However, the Recruitment Officer, Lt. Colonel Krayenhoff, refused to deviate from Article 5. Governor Van Middelkoop concurred since "the very close connection of these islands inhabitants with those of the people of Ceram could encourage smuggling of spices, rather than guard against it".

Van Middelkoop "did not want to deny that the attempts at recruitment created a wrong impression in some quarters" because "the Ambonese is reluctant to leave his village and has a wildly exaggerated fear of Batavia". But, he added, "there was not the slightest attempt at coercion or forced recruitment and the recruitment officers had not even left Fort Victoria prior to the outbreak of the revolt; the reason for the fear was entirely to be found in the forced recruitment under Daendels"[32]. In this same report Van Middelkoop also reports that the Resident of Menado had managed to take over the Menadonese soldiers who had been in British pay, but with the proviso that they would not be obliged to accept transfer from Menado. The Resident had reported this to the Governor who informed Krayenhoff. The latter disapproved, "since a soldier is bound to go where his Sovereign needs him", and he remarked that, even if these soldiers did not have to serve in Batavia, they should at least be liable for service in the entire Moluccan archipelago. The author has not been able to ascertain whether this assertion by Krayenhoff led the authorities to

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[32] Van Middelkoop's Ambon Report.

renege on promises made, but since shortly after the outbreak of the revolt the Commission ordered that Ambonese recruits be engaged for three years service in the Moluccas only, this does not seem likely[33].

Engelhard's incompetence is again illustrated. Although he disagreed with Van Middelkoop regarding the effectiveness of Ambonese soldiers in controlling smuggling - since the British had employed them in that function with great success - and also with the Military Commandant regarding the strict adherence to Article 5, he did do nothing to counteract their decisions. In his Batavia Report this First Commissioner wrote: "I considered it useless to give my contrary opinion because the Military Commandant and Chief of Troops was not to be swayed to deviate from his instructions". Only after the outbreak of the revolt, when a large number of ex-soldiers had either joined the revolt or were sympathetic to it, did it dawn on the civil and military officials that giving in to the demand for service in the Moluccas exclusively would not only increase their troop strength, but would also ensure greater control over the dangerous elements of the Ambon Regiment.

Buyskes, who showed a much better understanding of the interests of the Ambonese soldier (perhaps with the benefit of hind-sight), was convinced that the Ambonese could even have been won over to serve in Java, if common sense had prevailed. "Considering that the main reason for the inhabitants' objection to military service in Java is

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[33] Decree No. 47 dated 8 June 1817.

the uncertainty they feel about the fate of parents, children and other loved relations, and the impossibility to provide for them after their (the soldiers') departure. Further considering that the knowledge that relatives are assured their essential needs may have favourable results in increasing the number of volunteers for Java, it was decided: "that the parents, children, brothers or sisters of Ambonese soldiers serving in Java will receive a monthly allowance of twenty pounds of rice and half a pound of salt"[34].

VII. SUPPLIES OF DRIED FISH AND DENDENG WITHOUT PAYMENT

Commander Sloterdijk of the navy squadron in Ambon required these stores for his ships since their supply of salt meat had gone rotten. The Governor "by way of fair distribution" requisitioned part of this from the Residencies Saparua, Hila and Haruku, since none was available in Ambon and there had been no imports from Java. The price was set at 15 Rix Dollars per picul[35] giving the lie to the statement that no payment would be made. The inhabitants of Hila and Haruku had accepted this price but those of Saparua requested payment of 20 Rix Dollars per picul, a price that had been paid during the previous era of Dutch rule, on occasions when large quantities had been demanded. The government agreed to pay this amount, provided the Saparuans could prove that this price had been paid in the past. It does not appear as if the higher price was paid

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[34] Decree No. 230 dated 23 February 1818.

[35] Requisition dated 30 April 1817.

because the ex-Governor states: "About this nor about any of the other alleged grievances, nor yet about mistreatment and oppression of which the Resident was accused after the revolt, no complaint or petition reached me:[36].

The total quantity involved in this grievance was 1000 lbs, of which Hila's share was 500 lbs, Haruku's 200 lbs and Saparaua's a mere 300 lbs or 5 piculs. The total amount of money in dispute was 25 Rix Dollars, which makes this particular grievance seem - at least to the outside observer - rather trifling.

VIII. COMPULSORY DELIVERY OF COFFEE

Van Middelkoop rejects this point entirely. Although the supply had been recommended because of the shortage caused by the non-arrival of supplies from Java and the demand for supplies by naval ships and troops, a fair price had been agreed to and orders had been issued that only coffee in excess to local requirements was to be requisitioned. A similar arrangement had already been in force under British Rule. In Van Middelkoop's opinion it could therefore not be advanced as a grievance against the Dutch.

In support of his rejection of all grievances connected with compulsory deliveries of timber, salt, coffee or dried meat as well as those about paper money and charges about interference in school and church matters, as the reason for the revolt, Van Middelkoop quotes the statements of the ex-Raja of Pelauw and the Orang Kaya of Kailolo[37] that

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[36] Van Middelkoop's Sourabaya Report.

[37] Van Middelkoop's Sourabaya Report f.26.

the first meetings of the mutineers of these negories took place on 4 April, just ten days after the take-over from the British and barely two weeks after Van den Berg's arrival in Saparua. This was well before paper money was brought into circulation, requisitions were made, or salt experiments had been requested.

On 17 June somebody wrote from Ambon to Bengal about the events in Saparua: "The causes of the unfortunate rebellion are said to be the paper money, the recruitment of people for Java, the fact that the Resident had had a woman stripped naked and flogged in the bazaar, that he had demanded supplies of fish and sago for the troops without payment and that he had relied too much on his clerk Ornek". This was published in the Government Gazette of 7 August in Calcutta. The Batavian newspaper Bataviasche Courant No. 49 of 6 December 1817 reprinted this, adding: "The experiences and reports, which anybody here can obtain, will show these reports and the opinions expressed therein, for what they are". The righteous indignation is somewhat puzzling since, overall, the reports are in no way unjust. The fact that the Commission General and its money system might have been, at least in part, the cause of the revolt, did not dawn on them. "The sad affair of Saparua", Van der Capellen wrote in a private letter to the Minister of the Colonies, A.R.Falck, on 8 July 1817,[38] "is conveyed to you in the Official Missive. Wrong direction, tactless treatment of people and affairs, and the misuse of authority are undoubtedly the causes". And on 14 October[39] "The Resident

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[38] A.R.Falck, Gedenkschriften p.467.

[39] ibid p.471.

Van den Berg seems to be mainly responsible for this revolt"[40]. "The Saparuans are mostly so-called Christians and very fanatical. The British have maintained this spirit in the Moluccas and seem to have instilled the belief in the inhabitants that we would introduce an entirely different system. This caused bad blood". Again here the blame is put elsewhere.

Although Van den Berg is made the scapegoat by just about everybody, it is not very difficult to demonstrate the injustice of such a verdict. Buyskes' only accusation of Van den Berg is that it is hard to understand how he could have failed to suspect the rebellious stirrings which had been going on in Saparua since early May[41]. Van den Berg was not entirely ignorant of these facts. After Pieter Soehoka had told him the rumours about revolutionary meetings in the forest[42], the Resident had asked the Regents of Booy and Nollot[43] for comment and was assured that it was nothing but malicious gossip. It is not known for certain when the Njora of Nollot visited the Resident's wife[44], but it must have been very shortly before the outbreak; the fact that she mentioned that weapons were made ready points to that. It is unthinkable that Van den Berg would still have doubted the truth of Soehoka's message after it had been confirmed by the wife of the man who had misled him, and it is equally unthinkable that he - who had

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[40] This judgement was clearly based on Van Middelkoop's reports.

[41] Buyskes' Report 472.

[42] Van Doren. op.cit. p.128.

[43] Sensibly he chose Regents of two negories, one of which was situated in the South and one in the North of Saparua.

[44] cf. p.78.

shown himself to be a man of action on several occasions - would have failed to pass this on to his superiors in Ambon.

Van Doren[45] claims that the Njora told Mrs Van den Berg "in all innocence" what was happening, but in view of the good relationship between the ladies, as evidenced by the coffee-visit, it is very likely that she intended this as a last minute warning of imminent danger. It was the Resident's misfortune that the warning did not come earlier since that would have led to strong action from Ambon, at least if their eyes had been opened. But we know that even the warning delivered to him in person, by the Regent of Siri-Sori, Johannes Kyrauly, was disregarded by Van Middelkoop, but this is not mentioned by either of the Commissioners in their reports. Engelhard, according to Van Middelkoop, found all incoming warnings "very confusing, speculative and unclear". He did arrange for a small garrison of a sergeant, a corporal and six privates to be sent to Fort Hoorn at Pelauw and sent a few men to Hila to garrison Hitulama; but that was the sum total of his actions in this regard, since Colonel Kraijenhoff maintains that he could not spare one single man more.

Engelhard's report[46] regarding the warning to Resident Uitenbroek of Haruku is very important because it shows where, when, why and how the revolt was planned[47].

If we add what Buyskes wrote about the conspiracy:[48]

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[45] Van Doren. op.cit.

[46] Engelhard's Batavia Report.

[47] cf. p.76.

[48] Buyskes' Buitenzorg Report.

> "... I repeat smouldering fire of revolt, since it appears that, within a very few days after our take-over, there were meetings here and there, that there was correspondence between the inhabitants of Hitu and the north coast of Haruku and most likely with those of Saparua, at which they committed themselves under solemn oaths to make themselves free and independent".

These quotations from Engelhard's and Van Middelkoop's reports prove:

1. that the intention of the rebels was to gain independence and freedom from the government, which had nothing to do with local government actions in Saparua;

2. that within a very few days after the change of government rebel meetings took place[49], so that any connection between these and the Resident Van den Berg's actions is non-existent, because

3. the Hitu peninsula on which Liang is situated is part of the island of Ambon and the invitations to the conspiracy originated from that island and that the source of the revolt was on Ambon and not on Saparua.

From the above the conclusion may be drawn that the list of grievances as compiled by Matulesia and the Heads at Hatawano was drawn up to secure villagers' support for a course of action which had been decided upon wholely or largely independently from them.

It is clear that Buyskes realized immediately that the revolt had been hatched in Ambon, even though the chief rebels Matulesia and Rhebok were in Saparua and the revolution erupted there. He wrote:

> "As soon as I had taken over the government and had been briefed about the position, I realized

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[49] Only ten days after Van den Berg took up his appointment, from 25 March to 4 April.

> that it was absolutely essential to achieve the subjection of the rebellious negories in Hitu and restore peace on the island of Amboina, before action against the mutineers of Saparua and the neighbouring islands could be undertaken advantageously and safely"[50].

Ver Huell had suggested the immediate dispatch of his ship to Saparua "to occupy Fort Duurstede and forcefully suppress the revolt", but, as Buyskes reported to the King, "The Commissioners did not want to deprive Ambon of one of the capital ships in order to have them available to escape. At least", Buyskes wrote, "all measures taken have confirmed me in this opinion"[51].

This action by the Commissioners, which seems to have been inspired by personal interest, could be seen as highly reprehensible because the execution of Ver Huell's plan would have retaken the Fort in May (in fact it was not retaken until 3 August), the Beetjes expedition would not have been dispatched and the loss of his force of approximately two hundred men, not to mention the loss of military prestige, would have been avoided. All these factors contributed to the extended duration of the revolt, because they necessitated the preparation of a second expedition, thus giving the mutineers plenty of time to prepare fortifications on Saparua making reconquest so much harder.

. . .

We have looked at the part the grievances of the mutineers, whether justified or not, played in the actual

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[50] Buyskes' Buitenzorg Report.

[51] ibid.

eruption of the revolt. We have reached the conclusion that Van den Berg, as an inexperienced Resident, without any training for his difficult task, may have acted injudiciously and harshly, as both Van der Kemp and even Governor General Van der Capellen represented matters. But the facts point to the likelihood that Van den Berg was made the scapegoat.

Buyskes' conclusion quoted above: "...I repeat smouldering fire ..." starts thus: "Unforgivable are some dispositions of the Governor shortly after the take-over, which could only serve to fan the already smouldering fire of revolution..."[52]. If Van Middelkoop proved incompetent, Engelhard was weak and ineffectual. Both failed sadly in their duties and their mismanagement contributed to the revolt in Saparua. Engelhard himself confirms this in his letter to Senn van Basel referred to earlier[53] even if he represents Van Middelkoop as the only guilty party, when he writes:

> "It is certain that Van Middelkoop and the Decrees he issued, disregarding our instructions to conduct the government, provisionally, on the principles introduced by the British, contributed greatly to the troubles in Saparua".

In the same letter he accused Van Middelkoop of putting all blame on "the unfortunate Van den Berg for events to which he, Van Middelkoop, himself gave the orders, a fact he carefully refrained from mentioning, in the expectation that the Saparua archives will by now have been burned or lost". Those statements are of course an admission of guilt by Engelhard who, as First Commissioner, should never have consented to the orders issued by Van Middelkoop in

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[52] cf. pp. 76 and 145.

[53] cf. footnote p.121.

contravention of their instructions.

Irrespective of the blunders of the Ambon Commissioners, a good deal of blame must attach to the Commissioners General in Batavia. Their mistakes and shortcomings can be tabulated as follows:

1. The appointment as Resident to Saparua of a man who had had no training whatsoever for the position.

2. The demand that Moluccan soldiers be recruited especially for Java.

3. The dispatch of a totally inadequate military force to the Moluccas after authorities in Holland, at the Treaty of London of 13 August 1814, had parsimoniously declined to take over the Ambon Corps. The totally inadequate Dutch military might can only have encouraged the revolutionaries.

4. The introduction of the paper money system must also be laid at the door of Batavia or the Dutch government in Holland.

5. The failure of the Batavia Government to timely send supplies of salt, dried fish and meat, as well as coffee, to the Moluccas, for both the population and the naval squadron, was the reason for the forced deliveries, the main grievance of the negory people, which, in their eyes, fully justified the war against the "Company".

The conclusion to be drawn from the above must be that the immediate cause of the revolt of 1817 was the dissatisfaction of the people, caused by the fear of the re-introduction of the tough, pre-British, Dutch rule, fanned by an elite of schoolmasters and village heads who saw their traditional ruling status threatened, and by the

ex-soldiers, disgruntled by a Dutch refusal to re-engage them on acceptable terms; they, as newly created burgers fell outside the dati system and thus became dependent on the charity of their kinfolk. The incompetence of Dutch civil and military officials on the spot as well as the shortsighted policies of the Batavia and the Hague governments who approached delicate matters in the most hamfisted fashion, can only have confirmed the islanders in their resolve.

Ambonese in Adat Dress showing strong Portuguese influence.

CHAPTER V

THE AFTERMATH

What, if anything, had been achieved by the revolt to affect the Moluccas and the Moluccans either immediately or in the future? Peace was restored. The leaders had been tried by the Ambon Raad van Rustitie (Court of Justice). Twenty three had been sentenced to death; fourteen of these had been executed and nine had had their sentence remitted to banishment with hard labour in Java. These last joined a great number of prisoners considered dangerous to the public order. Buyskes had returned to Batavia, to his duties as Third Commissioner General and in his place Major-General H.M. De Kock was appointed Governor of the Moluccas.

Governor De Kock took up his appointment on 25 February 1818 and held the office for less than one year. Although an excellent governor in the opinion of the Commission General in Batavia, he was recalled to Java by the end of 1818 to succeed General Anthing as Army Commander on the latter's return to Holland. De Kock saw the revolt as a result of the fear felt by the natives of the return of the old system after the mild and supposedly fair rule of the British and of a number of wrong decisions taken by the government[1]. He went out of his way to convince the islanders that it was the government's intention to rule fairly and that no one would be oppressed. He was genuinely

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[1] Gen. De Kock Memorie van Overgave (1819) Schneither Collection 57 No. 128. Rijksarchief, The Hague.

concerned about the poverty that was rampant in the negories of Saparua, Haruku and the coast of Hitu, where most of the houses had been destroyed by fire, either in the course of the war or as punishment for participation in the revolt. To assist the people in rebuilding, little or no compulsory labour was demanded of them during De Kock's term of office and sago from the large government sago forests on Ceram was made available to the population at a very modest price. He was convinced that peace could be lasting if the natives were ruled gently and no great demands were made for compulsory labour. He also ordered that the Hongi expeditions should not be conducted annually; they were, he thought, too harsh on the villagers. He did not conduct one such expedition during his term of office, feeling that one every third year would be sufficient. He also took issue with Batavia over the rate of pay for civil servants in the Moluccas, which, despite higher prices in the islands, was lower than in Java. This, he felt, could easily lead to renewed extortion[2].

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Baron Van der Capellen, the Second Commissioner General and Governor General, has a reputation as a humane and compassionate man. He was an ardent admirer of the Abbé Raynal, author of Histoire philosophique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes[3] (the

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[2] ibid.

[3] Published in Amsterdam in 1771.

East and West Indies), who did for colonial rule what Rousseau had done for education and political science. The Abbé was a genuine representative of the Enlightenment; he clearly exposed the dark side of empire[4], especially in the Moluccas. His influence on Van der Capellen was a lasting one[5].

When the first Governor General for the Indies was to be appointed after the British interlude, there had been a number of people who felt themselves eminently eligible for the office. Prominent among them were Daendels and Dirk van Hogendorp, people with extensive experience in government of the colonies. But the King's choice fell on Van der Capellen, a man who, the King felt, subscribed to the same ethical and social ideals as he did himself. This was the reason why William bypassed the people with colonial experience whom he considered to belong to the past. The new colonial government was to have as its hallmark that decency and respectability that were the guidelines of William's own conduct as King of the Netherlands[6].

Like Raffles, Van der Capellen was of the opinion that the Indonesians had to be protected and their burden lightened; but he went a step further by explicitly recognizing that a degree of compulsion - on both sides - was necessary. He warmly supported the view of those who, in the Charter of 1802[7], had laid down that the administration

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[4] cf. p.170.

[5] De Graaf (1977) op.cit. p.235.

[6] Brugmans, H. Geschiedenis van Nederland. Vol. VIII, Amsterdam (1937) pp. 377-8.

[7] cf. p.36.

"should treat the indigenous people as a father treats his child and not as a ruler treats his subjects"[8].

King William I saw the colonies, as did most of his contemporaries, as a concern that should be profitable. He ordered the Commissioners to re-organise the government for which purpose they received extensive instructions. The last lines of Art. 19 of these instructions read:

> "With regard to the cloves produced in and around Ambon, they shall especially investigate if and why the Monopoly must be considered more advantageous to the State than the encouragement of the cultivation through free trade and the introduction of land dues and import and export duties".

This part of their instructions had not yet been fulfilled by the Commission by the time the Revolt erupted.

During the Ambon Revolt Van der Capallen had shown a special concern for the operation of the Moluccan system and its effect on the population. When, after Elout's and Buyskes' departure, he assumed the office of Governor General, one of his first acts was to set up a Moluccan Commission, composed of H.J. Van de Graaff and G.T.Meylan, his chief advisers. In their report, submitted in 1821, they expressed the opinion that the conditions of the people, under the present system, were most unfavourable and they recommended the abolition of the monopoly and the encouragement of colonisation by European farmers, to grow spices under free-trade conditions. This commission's findings were backed by Governor Merkus who made an extensive inspection tour of the entire Moluccas shortly after taking up his appointment there.

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[8] Tas, S. op.cit. p.54.

Before making a decision Van der Capellen decided to acquaint himself with the circumstances, in person and on the spot, but the heavy pressure of work forced him to delay his visit until 1824. Then, with Merkus and Van de Graaff as his advisers, he conducted a new investigation.

There is a record of their deliberations in the Rijksarchief[9]. They agreed that the Monopoly System should go, not only in the interest of the population which had suffered under it for two centuries, but also in the real interest of the state. They based this decision on the following considerations: the impossibility of maintaining the monopoly in the face of the free shipping concessions in the Moluccas, which made it impossible to maintain all the measures required to enforce it; the high cost of government supervision and defence that were inseparable from the system; the fact that the interest of the population was diametrically opposed to the demands of government; and finally on the diminishing income derived by government due to steadily sinking prices for spices, both in the Indies and the European Markets, as a direct result of the planting of clove trees outside the Dutch East Indies, especially during the British Interregnum. This last point they saw as the reason why the Moluccas, instead of being a profitable possession for the fatherland, would become a pressing financial burden on the finances of the Indies. They were agreed, not only on the necessity of introducing a system of government for those territories that would be more in harmony with the principles on which the government was now based - fairness to the people and the clearly understood continuing interest of the government - but also

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[9] Collection "Kolonien na 1813" file 966, Rijksarchief, The Hague. Quoted by Stapel op.cit. p.182.

in the belief that the intended changes must consist of total abolition of the monopoly system and its replacement by a system of free-trade. The introduction of free trade would necessitate the levying of regular taxes to offset the cost of sound, politic and financial government.

As regards the way in which this government was to be achieved and the means of setting it into operation, the opinions of the Commission differed. They felt that special measures were required to introduce the system, but Governor Merkus felt they could be introduced immediately.

Whatever the course, it would cost a considerable amount during the first few years. If the existing system were abolished gradually no immediate reduction of the army would be possible and costs would be considerable for a few years. If, on the other hand, it was abolished immediately, then the benefits would be immediate too. The people's co-operation with the government, that would result, would allow an immediate reduction of the armed forces in the area and a consequent saving of expenses.

The Governor General felt that the old monopoly system was incompatible with the personal ideals of the King and these considerations inclined him to consent to the immediate removal of all obstacles to this abolition, but he also considered that, on such a matter of principle, he would not be justified in making decisions without extensive debate about the consequences by the entire "high Government". He also thought that some immediate measures should be taken to remove the worst of the pressure.

The result was the "Moluccan Publication" of 1824, which was posted all over the islands in a Dutch and Malay

text. This remarkable document is printed in the Staatsblad (Government Gazette) No. 19a 1824[10]. After the solemn opening, addressed to all the South Moluccan peoples, mentioned by name, the Governor General informed them of the King's bidding to pay special attention to the Moluccas during his stay in the East. Pressure of work had prevented him, so far, from doing much about this and he had had to rely on other people to investigate the needs of Ambon, but now he had come in person to study their plight. Here follows a list of disasters which had affected the Moluccan people, interspersed with some of their failings: poverty, dependency, unrest and disputes, rebellion against the Heads, smuggling, lawlessness and laziness. To a considerable extent the fault was not theirs, and therefore, Van der Capellen claimed, he had not come to punish but to save. He promised some improvements: complete abolition of the hongi-expeditions, no more unpaid labour duties and a doubling of payments for materials supplied. New laws and regulations regarding local government would be introduced and other reforms brought down. For their part, the islanders ought to receive government officials well, because from now on the offences which had been committed by officials would cease: no more clove trees would be cut down, no more gardens destroyed, no more prahus or houses burned, there would be no more interference with religion and people would be protected against attacks from pirates. In his Journal, after discussing the Publication, Van der

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[10] Quoted by F.W.Stapel in "Een en ander over de Molukken Publicatie van 1824", Bijdragen Vol. 86 (1930) p.180.

Capellen wrote: "I have informed the King of my transactions in Amboyna and not hidden from His Majesty that the Monopoly System can no longer be maintained"[11].

No doubt one of Van der Capellen's most bitter disappointments must have been that the King disagreed with most of his actions. The interference of the Dutch government in the economics of the islanders, the almost complete freedom given to the Governor of the Moluccas, Merkus, to prepare for a system of free trade and cultivation, the "fanatical speeches" to the people and the Publication were in the King's eyes "polemical and pointless". In 1826 the Count Du Bus de Gisignies, sent out to the Indies as a Commission of One, was authorised by the Minister for the Colonies to reverse the decisions regarding the Moluccas and to re-instate the compulsory cultivation. The islanders remained free to dispose of their cloves as they wished, as long as they were sold in Ambon. In 1827 Du Bus de Gisignies ordered that the clove cultivation be extended to the South Coast of Ceram, that the cultivations be regularly inspected and that everything that stood in the way of this cultivation be eliminated, but care was to be taken not to antagonise the islanders[12].

Less than a month before the Ambon Publication was proclaimed on 15 April 1824 - in fact at the very time that Van der Capellen was in Ambon - representatives of the Netherlands government had signed the London Treaty of 17 March 1824, in which, in Article I, the subjects of both

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[11] "Journaal van Baron Van der Capellen van zijn reis door de Molukken", Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indie. Vol. II (1855).

[12] Staatsblad No. 80, 1827. Source: H. van der Wijck, "De Nederlandsche Oost Indische Bezittingen" Ph.D. Thesis, s'Gravenhage. (1866).

states were guaranteed free trade in each others colonies, but in which also, in Article 7, the Moluccan Islands and especially Ambon, Banda and Ternate and their immediate dependencies were "specifically excluded until such times when the Netherlands government will deem it advisable to abolish the monopoly in spices".

This decided the fate of Van der Capellen's propositions[13].

The "Moluccan Publication" is an important document, nonetheless, as the first official government document which expresses a new spirit. It differs from other government documents in that it openly admits that the policies pursued thus far had been detrimental to the population. The appreciation of such open mindedness, as might be expected, was varied. The Lt. Governor General admired it greatly. But an (anonymous) civil servant wrote in the margin of the Publication: "If the population had been able to understand it, it would have caused much damage"[14]. Such prognostications did not eventuate, however, probably because the Ambonese, in all likelihood, did not understand the stilted high Malay.

Why should the anonymous writer have been worried? Most likely because of the new spirit expressed in the proclamation. An open confession of guilt, until this moment, had not been the government's line. But why had the King refused to abolish the clove monopoly in the Moluccas? There were several arguments against an immediate

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[13] See p.161.

[14] Stapel (1930) op.cit. p.181.

or rapid abolition of this century old economic system. Van der Capellen and Van de Graaff already suspected that, with the abolitions of the (in their view fatal) monopoly, little or no co-operation by the people could be counted on, as they would see the unpleasantness of the unfamiliar rather than the benefits intended. The long suffering, mostly conservative, Moluccan population would not welcome change but only saw trouble in innovation. Having been used to enforced cultivation for centuries they simply would have no conception of free cultivation and also lacked the necessary experience to act as merchants in a free market.

Another difficulty was fiscal in nature. The compulsory clove cultivation had become a kind of tax. Abolition of the monopoly would therefore inevitably mean the introduction of a sales tax on the crop or an export duty on the cloves produced. Those duties would then, in fact, only be paid by the government's subjects and not by the people of Buru, Ceram, Djilolo and other islands adjacent to Ambon, since these islands, at that time, did not pay any attention to government authority. Consequently they would be able to sell their cloves at a lower price to itinerant traders, creating unfair competition for the duty paying government subjects. A prerequisite for the general introduction of a free economy would be the subjection of all the clove producing islands by the Dutch government and the prospect for this was still way off. The only result of Van der Capellen's visit was a modest increase in the price the government paid for cloves. In 1828 a law was passed that prohibited anybody from leaving their negory, unless they had fulfilled their obligation to tend 90 clove trees[15].

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[15] Stapel. ibid passim.

In the long run, however, the clove monopoly was unsustainable. Not only was the liberal element in Holland, which gained power in 1848, strongly against it, but the system also was no longer viable financially. World market prices dropped steadily. Since the end of the eighteenth century increasing quantities of cloves were grown outside the Moluccas and the abolition of the monopoly was therefore a matter of time. When the so-called Culture System, introduced much later than the Ambon System, was gradually abolished, the clove monopoly of Ambon was also finally abolished. The date of the official abolition was 1 January 1864.

Tardiness in this matter was largely due to the fact that the Dutch King could govern the colonies autocratically since no one had objected when the Constitution of 1815 left the complete control over the colonies to the King. This clause remained in the revised Constitution of 1840 and parliament did not have direct control over the policies followed by the government in the Indies until the Compatability Act of 1864 had been voted.

Anticipating the difficulties which Ambonese, lacking in business mindedness, might have in marketing their own produce, they were allowed, for a number of years, to deliver their cloves to the government stores at a fixed price. The Moluccans never took up business as merchants and the market was cornered by the Chinese and Arab traders. Prices dropped tremendously. While in 1874 the price was still 105 cents per pound it had dropped to a mere 16 cents by 1903. This was the end of the Moluccan spice trade. Whereas the entire clove trade had once been concentrated on

Ambon, the total crop of the islands today represents only two to three per cent of the world consumption[16].

The end of the spice monopoly did not mean the inevitable pauperisation of the Moluccas. Nature is kind in these islands; there is plenty of fish in the sea and the sago tree provides food in abundance for very little work. So it took little effort to enjoy a simple existence. But there is a large gap between a simple existence and a degree of prosperity, and the more enterprising sought to close that gap, in order to do which, they had to look beyond their native islands.

The people of Ambon still had an important role to play for which the past had prepared them to some extent. As soldiers, minor civil servants and evangelists, they were important in the Indies in the first half of the nineteenth century, and after, just as they had been in the second half of the eighteenth century.

It was the Pattimura revolt that revived the Ambonese Schutterij or Burger Militia. Although its origin went back to the sixteenth century, it had gone into a decline in the eighteenth. In 1817 it had played its part well, especially in Saparua. Immediately afterwards it had again gone into a brief decline from which it was revived anew for the visit of Governor General Van der Capellen in 1824, after which it flourished until its final abolition in 1923. The militia, which trained with the regular garrison, helped keep the military tradition and spirit of Ambon alive. This spirit had received a severe setback

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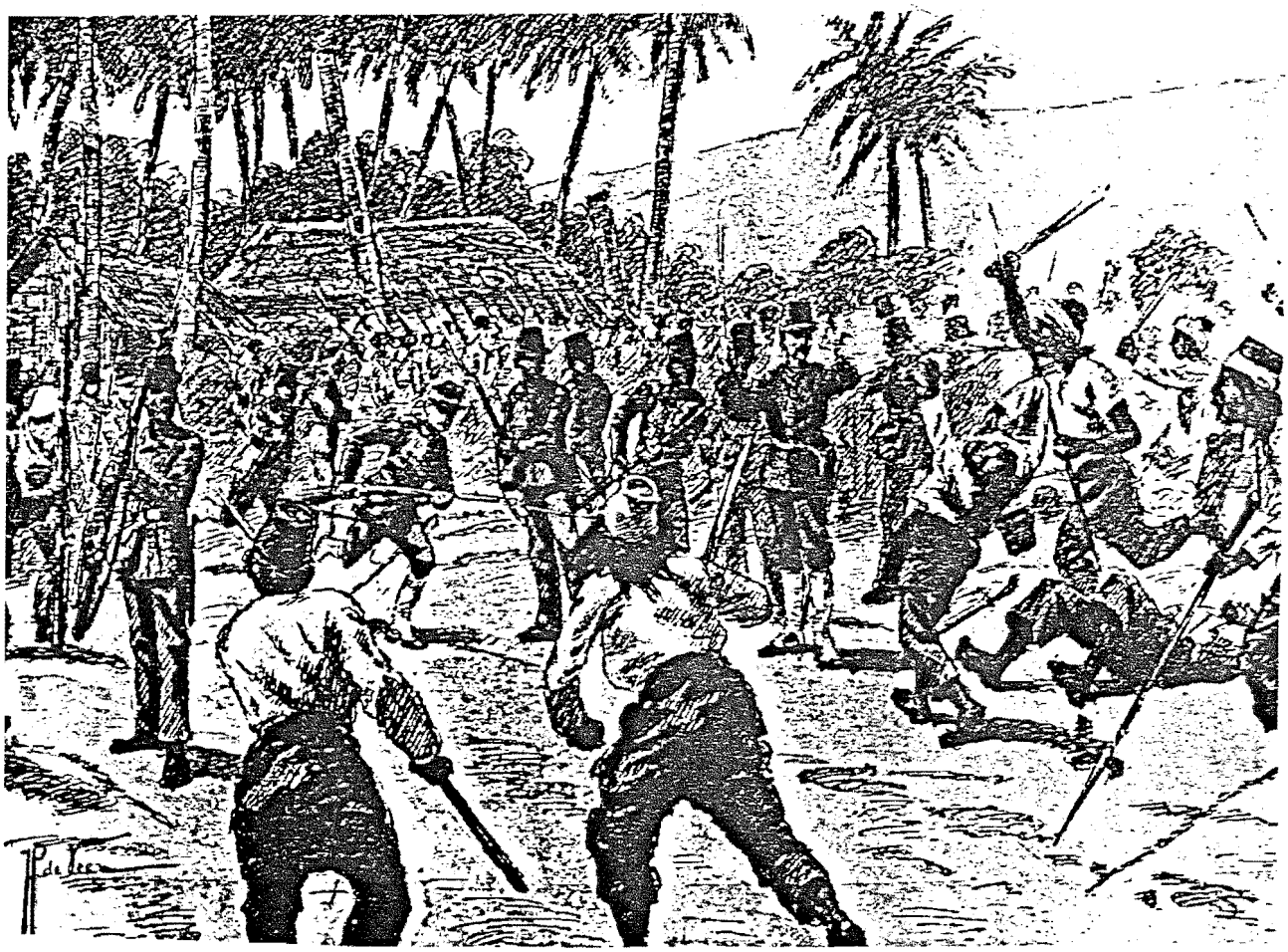
[16] H.J. De Graaf (1977) op.cit. p.244.

Amboneese Troops in the War with Boni on Celebes (1859)
after a drawing by P.J. de Veer.



Ambonese troops fighting Atjehnese "rebels" during the
second expedition in 1874.

in 1804 when Daendels ordered the recruitment of three companies of Ambonese infantry and one cavalry company and his recruiting platoons did not shrink from crimping and shanghaiing villagers. This was the reason why military service was still unpopular in 1817 and why comparatively few Ambonese took part in the 1825-1830 Java war when soldiers were badly needed. However, in this war the Ambonese did serve as garrison troops in the Moluccas, thus freeing other troops for Java, but this was still done on the strict condition that Ambonese troops could undertake no service beyond their home islands.

In 1829 a conspiracy among Saparuan soldiers in the Ambon garrison was apparently discovered, with a new revolt as the aim. The fact that the conspirators were Saparuans may provide a link back to 1817: a small number of rebels from that time had remained in hiding in the Saparuan mountains. The 1829 conspiracy was said to have been better planned and to be more far reaching than the 1817 mutiny. Plans had been carefully prepared and nothing leaked out until, on 16 February, some letters, containing invitations to take part in the revolt, were smuggled into the hands of the government. Further incriminating letters were intercepted and the suspicion was confirmed that they originated amongst the military in Saparua. An informer now revealed that nine Saparuan soldiers were the leaders who had planned to stage a revolt on the night of 18 February 1829; they were to murder all the Europeans in the Fort, as well as those Ambonese soldiers who refused to co-operate. The Military Command acted at once and on the 17th the hundred and fifty Saparuans in the garrison were arrested

during unarmed morning parade[17]. It was subsequently found that the guns in the Fort had been spiked and filled with rubble and rock. An investigation brought evidence that the plot was hatched by nine Saparuan soldiers in the Ambon garrison, who had personal grudges and had made common cause with the remnants of the 1817 mutineers in the Saparua mountains[18]. This was the last real stirring in the Moluccas.

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By 1828, enlistment in the army became truly voluntary and an attractive handsel was paid on enlistment. As a result military service regained popularity and soldiering, in time, became an honorable profession again.

As soldiers the Ambonese were excellent, brave and generally reliable, although their self confidence, significantly, at times threatened to turn into insurrection when they felt wronged. They played a major role in the pacification of the Indonesian archipelago, participating in the expeditions against Bali and Lombok and particularly in the protracted Atjeh wars at the end of the nineteenth century, when no fewer than 4434 Ambonese served in the army, a number that, on the basis of the population of the islands, was very high indeed. At this time there were few

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[17] De Bruyn Kops, op.cit. pp. 32-39.

[18] Penerbitan Sumbur-Sumbur Sedjarah. Arsip Masional Republic Indonesia No. 4. Lamporan Politik Tahun 1837 Djakarta (1971).

families who did not have a relative in the Dutch colonial army[19].

Because of their Christianity they remained aloof from their environment in all the large garrison towns in Indonesia, establishing their own settlements with their own churches and ministers. They also retained contact with their home islands. It was customary, for instance, to refrain from having children, born outside Ambon, baptized until the whole family was on furlough in their Ambonese village. Up to and including the difficult situation during World War II they remained loyal. Even in the years of the Indonesian struggle for independence was there much strong loyalty.

Over the centuries, both before and after the 1817 revolt, a strong bond had existed between the Dutch rulers, whether Company or Government, and the Ambonese, especially the Christian Ambonese. Such confrontations as there were before 1817 had been between negories rather than between negories on the one hand versus government on the other[20]. The birthday of the Prince-Stadholder, and later of the Monarch, were nowhere celebrated more enthusiastically than in Ambon; the "trinity" God-Ambon-Oranje" was no empty rallying cry. It was through this alliance that they were able to play an important role in the archipelago.

In this "eternal alliance" two things stand out clearly: First, it had a patriarchal or paternalistic character. Today when the word "paternalistic" is used, there is, often unjustly, a pejorative implication. But let

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[19] G.W.T.Dames, Oom Ambon van het K.N.I.L. The Hague. (1954) p.15.

[20] cf. p.68.

us remember what "paternalism" meant in practice in Ambon in our period. It meant first that almost all initiatives came from Batavia or the Ambon Fort. Although this state of affairs created a feeling of loyalty in the Ambonese, it did not mean that the civil servant in the Moluccas had an easy job. It seems to be almost an innate trait of the Ambonese not to accept passively all that has been ordained by government. Second, the bond with the Dutch also provided the Ambonese with a somewhat privileged position. Ambon's soldiers received higher pay than soldiers from other ethnic groups and the fact that schooling had been provided in Ambon literally centuries before elsewhere in Indonesia gave it a monopoly position in supplying minor civil servants from Sabang in the west to Merauke in the east of the Indonesian archipelago.

This patriarchal system was curtailed when in 1921 an Ambon Council was established. This legislative body of twenty seven members numbered five Dutchmen, two Vreemde Oosterlingen (Foreign Orientals), a term referring to Chinese and Arab citizens, and twenty Ambonese. Some other parts of Indonesia were given similar bodies but nowhere was the number of indigenous members as high.

This Council was readily accepted by the population but it had the effect of slowly diminishing the special nature of Ambon's position. The new Hollandsch-Inlandsche School (Dutch-Native Schools), where Dutch was taught and became the language of education in the higher classes, were established in other parts of Indonesia and in due course produced local candidates for the civil service; this policy had its effect on Ambon's monopoly.

The first reaction to the "Awakening East" after the Russo-Japanese war - the first war in which an Asian nation had proved itself superior to the white race which presumed superiority in the colonies - led to the foundation of the Javanese "Budi Utama" movement, followed by the inter-island "Sarekat Islam". The Ambonese, as Christians, did not feel at home in either of these organisations, but they had their effect, especially on the expatriate Ambonese soldiers and civil servants. They in turn began to organise. Their first organisation "Wilhelmina", established in 1908, had an avowedly loyal character. The "Sarekat Ambon", founded by the journalist Patty in 1920, was more nationalistic. Patty, a communist, travelled to Ambon in 1923, to promote his radical views, but the traditional, government-orientated population did not want any of it and, at the request of the Ambon Council of 28 May, 1923, Patty was banished to Bencoolen, the same place to which Sukarno was banished some years later. After 1930 "Sarekat Ambon" was reorganised into a more moderate movement, but still did not get government approval, nor did it receive a sympathetic reception from other Indonesian Nationalists, who dubbed its members "Belanda Ambon" - Ambonese Dutch.

By now another organisation, the "Moluks Politiek Verbond", M.P.V. (Moluccan Political League) made its appearance and due to its moderate conduct, and its statutes, was acceptable to officialdom. Their aim was self-rule, but under no condition would they relinquish the ties with the Netherlands. As regards Indonesian Independence they adopted a wait and see attitude, they were for "Freedom for

Indonesia" but not for "Indonesia free from Holland"[21].

. . .

Much is made in Indonesian circles of Pattimura as the initiator of the fight against colonialism and for independence. The facts simply do not bear this out. Although it is true that Dutch intervention in Indonesia dates from the sixteenth century, it can hardly be argued that real colonialism existed at that time. Colonialism proper, in which the state rather than the V.O.C. took a major role, dates from the nineteenth century and a case can be made that it was then that the first step was taken in Indonesia. The Princely States in Java and elsewhere had over the centuries become synonymous with impoverished peasantry, and the colonial administration built a state which, although bureaucratic was nonetheless reasonably efficient and had interests which extended to social care. The beliefs of some of the modern descendants of the Orientalists that, but for the interference of western powers, the East would have evolved its own efficient states, is open to question. Such claims, as well as the theories of Van Leur, are often used to argue from the particular to the general. They ignore the historical fact that, although there were great kingdoms in Java and parts of Sumatra in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, this was not the case in the outlying islands of Indonesia which made up the bulk of its territory. Here

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[21] J.T.Petrus-Blumberger, De Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlands Indie. Amsterdam. (1931) pp. 46-48 and 302-305.

small despotic statelets were more common; the stagnation - and that is not really too strong a word - which greeted the Western powers eventually enabled those powers to secure an easy victory.

The Nationalism that eventually arose in Indonesia was not so much the product of oppressive rule as of deeper forces of social change that accompanied it.

> "It was not entirely the harshness of Dutch policy that led to the rise of organised nationalism; on the contrary the foundation of activist societies dedicated to the struggle for independence coincided with attempts on the part of the Netherlands to remedy past wrongs and to earn herself a reputation for enlightened colonial rule. This is not an uncommon experience in the annals of colonial rule. Colonial welfare policies tend to produce the reverse of gratitude - only the colonial power itself would expect otherwise - and it might not seem too much to say that in Indonesia's case, its nationalistic movement was the product of the virtue rather than the vice of Dutch rule"[22].

In the case of the South Moluccas, the present author would argue that the South Moluccas ultimately owe their sense of independence, their strong sense of personal rights and their sense of loyalty to the pledged word, to the centuries-old influence of protestant Christianity, which was initiated by the East India Company with rapidly lessening zeal. The shades of the first seventeenth Century ministers of religion rise behind the present South Moluccans from the remote past.

The claim of the Dutch and the South Moluccans of Moluccan "Loyalty through the Ages" has been denied by today's Indonesia and by some western writers[23] who argue that this is merely the result of Dutch propaganda. Van

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[22] J.D. Legge. Indonesia Spectrum Books, New Jersey, (1964) pp. 114/5.

[23] e.g. B. Van Kaam, Ambon door de Eeuwen. (1977).

Kaam argues that during the colonial period the Dutch robbed the Moluccan people of their history and, consequently, of the means of expressing their own identity. It might well be suggested that he, in this instance, allows himself to get carried away by the same preoccupation with the more distant past that influenced some of the Orientalists of well over a century ago. One cannot brush aside 350 years of history, and the replacement of a relatively unsophisticated animistic society by a Christian westernised economy, as a mere interference in a people's history, as if it had no part in the shaping of their identity. Van Kaam also argues that the Dutch have a desire to represent their relationship with the Moluccans as being much more harmonious than it, in fact, was. "This", he concludes, "is not difficult to explain, but is bad economic history"[24]. J.A.Manusama, President in Exile of the "South Moluccan Republic" disagrees with him and makes this clear when he states in his book Om Recht en Vrijheid (For Justice and Freedom)[25]:

> "Dutch rule over the islands, which lasted more than 350 years, was never really seen as colonial oppression or colonial domination. But it did reduce these once so prosperous and rich spice-islands to the economically poor South Moluccas of today. There is no point in reproaching the Dutch for this and it would be completely futile to do so, because as well as the impoverishment and economic neglect of the country, they gave its inhabitants the Christian religion and western culture and civilisation".

In other words, the Moluccans identified with the Dutch even though not blind to their faults and shortcomings, and

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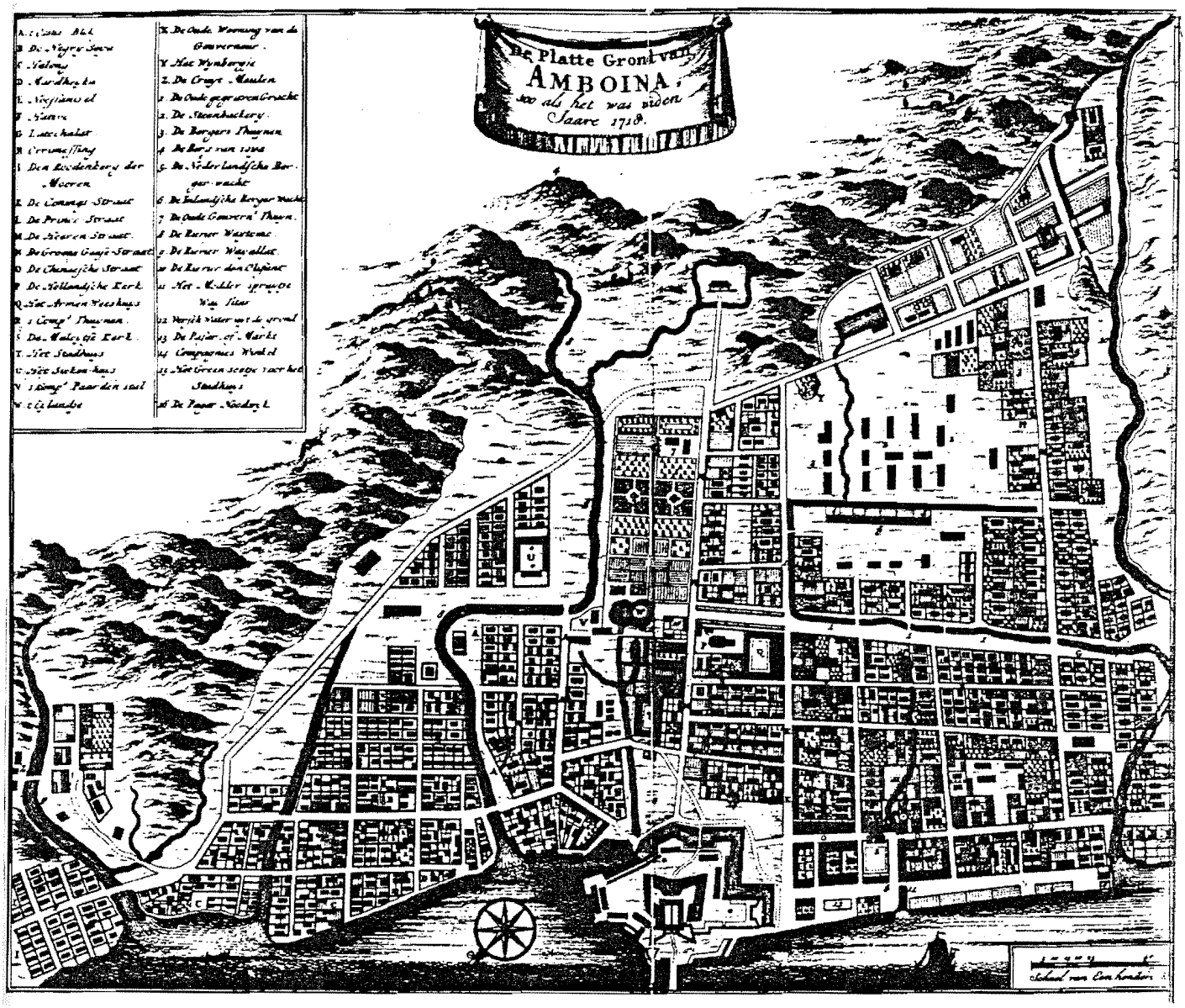
[24] Van Kaam, B. op.cit. p.8.

[25] Manusama, J.A. Om Recht en Vrijheid. Leiden (1952).

it was this identification that engendered a sense of loyalty from which there was only one serious lapse, namely the 1817 revolt.



Map of Ambon Town 1718.

CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE

"Liberal" historians of the nineteenth century, saw much of the history of the Moluccas from the sixteenth century onward as a fight of brave champions for free trade against the cruel East India Company out for profits only. Of course this opposition was present, but there were much deeper causes. It was not only a matter of trade in spices; it was much more a struggle between two religious ideologies, between Muslim and Christian, which can be taken much further back to old disagreements preceding the arrival of Europeans in the Far East. In addition there were the Portuguese who had to be driven out, and the Spaniards who had to be watched. There was the Sultan of Ternate who claimed sovereignty over the South Moluccas and the rivalry between the Uli-Lima and the Uli-Siwa. There were the British competitors and their suppliers, the spice smuggling Macassarese, who further complicated the situation. Add to this the many local tribal battles, and some idea of the Moluccan chaos in those days becomes clear.

It is not easy to pronounce positively on particular aspects, but the general picture that seems to emerge is that the Dutch East India Company, with the aid of their Moluccan allies, created a degree of peace and even a measure of welfare, the result of which is still evident today. At the very least the Moluccans would appear to have been resigned to the situation. It is true that little research in depth has been done on the eighteenth century history of the Moluccas. But printed literature on Java and the V.O.C. as a whole would certainly have made mention

of any serious uprising in the all important Spice Islands, had any occurred in that time.

It is equally difficult to pronounce on the causes of the Pattimura Revolt which disturbed this apparent peace. As might be expected, differences arise between the Dutch and Indonesian views of this event. All the documents relating to this revolt, with the exception of the "Porto Report", are Dutch in origin, as are the personal and ship's Journals and the written accounts of eye witnesses. The reason for this, of course, is the fact that few documents, reports or journals of Moluccan origin have survived, if indeed they ever existed.

During a visit to Indonesia the author had the pleasure of meeting a number of Indonesian historians who have specialized in aspects of Ambonese history and who brought him up to date with recent Indonesian literature on the subject of Pattimura. As a matter of fact very little was written in independent Indonesia on this subject and until 1969, when Pattimura was proclaimed an official "National Hero of Indonesia", he was virtually unknown outside Moluccan circles. In the Moluccas, however, his story and that of his co-fighters, remained popular and became part of Ambonese folklore.

Since all the source material used for recent Indonesian accounts of the Pattimura Revolt has been included in the material used by the present author, any difference in opinions and conclusions must be a matter of interpretation. How widely this interpretation can vary is perhaps most clearly indicated by the fact that both the Republik Maluku Selatan and the Republic of Indonesia put

forward Pattimura as "their" Freedom Hero.

F.Hitipeuw starts his little booklet on National Hero Pattimura[1] with these stirring sentences:

> "Every year on 15 May, we commemorate the historic start of Pattimura's war in 1817, to liberate the Indonesian people of the Moluccas from Dutch imperialist colonialism.
> Just as the people of France, on 14 July 1789 marched on, and took, the Bastille and by so doing put an end to Absolutism, so did the Indonesian people of the Moluccas, on 15 May 1817, march against Fort Duurstede at Saparua and thus put an end to Dutch imperialism."

That, of course, is putting matters rather simplisticly. Dutch imperialism was to last another hundred and thirty four years, and, at the end of that period, the people of the independent Republic of the South Moluccas (R.M.S.) found themselves engaged in a freedom war against what many of them saw as an imperialistic Republic of Indonesia.

. . .

By any western standards of today the Moluccans in the early nineteenth century were poor. But poverty is relative and, like the Russian peasants of almost a century later, they had to be made aware of the fact. This is not a rationalisation. The point has been made earlier that it required little effort of the Moluccans to satisfy their basic needs. Sago and fish were easily obtained and such payments as they received for their spices were, if required, made in the form of the cotton piecegoods they needed. There was evidence of a certain welfare which expressed itself in

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[1] F.Hitipeuw. Keunikan Perjuangan Pahlawan Nasional Pattimura dalam Menentang Penjajahan di Maluku, p.5.

the building of beautiful churches which also served as schools. The Ambonese, especially the Burgers, identified with the Europeans through their common Christianity.

Disillusionment came when the British twice took over the government without, as far as the Moluccans could see, much resistance by the Dutch. The brutal period of Daendels' rule, between the two British interregnums, brought this disappointment to a head, at least as far as the schoolmaster/pastors were concerned. Their influence and independence suffered badly because of the abolition of financial aid to school and church.

When, during the second British interregnum, the prestige of the Regents was diminished by stricter control and accountability, a second important elite group was alienated from the government. Although the schoolmasters' influence was strengthened for a while - when Resident Martin reinstated financial assistance to school and church - they again became apprehensive when the return of the Dutch became imminent.

The general picture that comes through from this is that an atmosphere was created in which general discontent would thrive. Although the underlying causes did not really affect the villagers to any great extent, what did affect them were the immediate grievances, real or fabricated, which were used by the disgruntled Regents, schoolmasters and ex-members of the disbanded Ambon Corps, to - as Buyskes put it - fan the smouldering fires of revolt.

The leaders who inspired the revolt and the groups that supported them acted in response to these grievances and in accordance with a belief system that the Europeans did not

understand or refused to accept. The adherents of the movement believed their causes to be righteous, their means to be potent and their leaders' solutions effective. Their perception of events that gave rise to the revolt and the factors that determined their mode of expression provided very different explanations of the rebellion than those offered by the European colonisers. We have argued that these grievances were rooted in discontent that arose from the participants' personal experiences affecting the conditions under which they lived their everyday lives, and not from conscious perceptions of culture clashes and socio-cultural transformation.

In the Moluccas the re-introduction of Dutch rule was seen as a threat to the position of the established groups who felt that a gap was created between what they felt they deserved in terms of status and material reward and what they possessed or had the capacity to obtain. This perception of a discrepancy between expectations and capacities led to a sense of deprivation. Individuals and groups compared their status and abilities to those of others - for example, the inhabitants of Ceram - or those that existed, or were thought to have existed, in earlier times. In this type of process, the element of change is critical, for "change itself creates discrepancies between legitimate expectations and actualities, either by worsening the conditions of the group, or by exposing a group to new standards"[2]. Because the stress and frustration

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[2] For a discussion of these concepts see P.Curtin "Nationalism in Africa" Review of Politics Vol. 28 (1966) pp. 143-153.

that accompanied these feelings of relative deprivation were sufficiently intense and shared, they produced a protest movement in the Moluccas designed to close the gap between the participants' expectations and their capacities.

The lack of success of the revolt, after the first brief flash of victory, was due, in large measure, to the fact that participation by the population was neither total nor, in many cases, full-hearted. Because of their "half European" status, the bulk of the Burgers remained loyal to the Dutch government in 1817, while, as we saw, the entire population of Nusa Laut was coerced into participation by direct threats[3].

Although the revolution was led by Burgers, these were, without exception, people with personal grievances, such as the schoolmasters who feared for their position, or the newly created Burgers, the ex-members of the Ambon Corps, who resented the fact that the new government had not re-engaged them on acceptable terms. The average villager did not stand to gain or lose all that much either way, which is probably the reason why, in most instances, in the face of a determined attack by the Dutch, his resistance crumbled rapidly.

The result of the revolt, paradoxically, was a strengthening of the bond between Ambonese and Dutch. It was probably the realization that little advance would be possible in Ambon's agriculture, that determined Ambon's role hereafter. In ever increasing numbers the Ambonese

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[3] See p.102.

entered into Dutch military service, becoming, as it were, the Gurkhas of the Dutch colonial army; they also joined the Dutch civil service in large numbers, becoming what even Sukarno called them, in several of his speeches: Belanda Hitam - Black Dutchmen.

History had gone full circle. The peaceful co-existence of the hundred and fifty years before the revolt, from which it was an aberration, had been restored. But for one abortive attempt at change in 1829, that peaceful co-existence was to continue for almost another one hundred and fifty years.

. . .

In this study the words of the poet Isaac da Costa could often have been quoted: "In the past lies the present, in the now that which shall be". Each nation is determined to a great extent by its past.

The Dutch cannot be separated from their fight for freedom from the Spanish, when their Royal family and their national anthem were born; similarly the Indonesian Nationalists refer with greater or lesser justification to the great Javanese state of Madjapahit that thrived in the fifteenth century. So too, the history of the Ambonese people has its own character, an unmistakeable stamp that is hard to erase, namely a centuries-old alliance with the Dutch, which found strong expression in their high regard for the Royal House of Orange. Their co-operation with the colonisers even precedes the arrival of the Dutch in the East. It goes back to the Portuguese.

The Ambonese felt called to a special task, a feeling

in which their acceptance of the Christian faith has played, and still plays, a very special role. Local protests, grumbling and the exceptional armed resistance are easily understood, given the strong self-assertiveness of the Ambonese but these were not typical of Ambonese/Dutch relationship. The Indonesian authorities who forcibly incorporated the Republic of the South Moluccas in 1951 were well aware of this bond and tried to create, beside this tradition of loyalty to the Dutch, a legend of fierce opposition to the colonial rulers. For this purpose the figure of Matulesia, now by preference called Pattimura, has been pushed to the fore. Previously unknown outside the Moluccas, he was now given the image of a Nationalist Freedom Fighter and in the seventies proclaimed an "Official Hero of Indonesia". No other ethnic group in Indonesia has been subjected to such a strong attempt to bend their past in a historical sense. This prompts the question: If there was such a strong pro-Indonesian movement in Ambon prior to 1940, why should such an attempt be necessary? The other question that can also be asked is: Is this Ambonese loyalty still alive or did it disappear after the bloody demise of the Republik Maluku Selatan? This latter question is hard to answer. The Ambonese who can protest vociferously can also be extremely tight-lipped about certain things. But the fact that the Indonesian authorities found it necessary to create their "counter myth", complete with statues and commemorative postage stamps, gives food for thought.

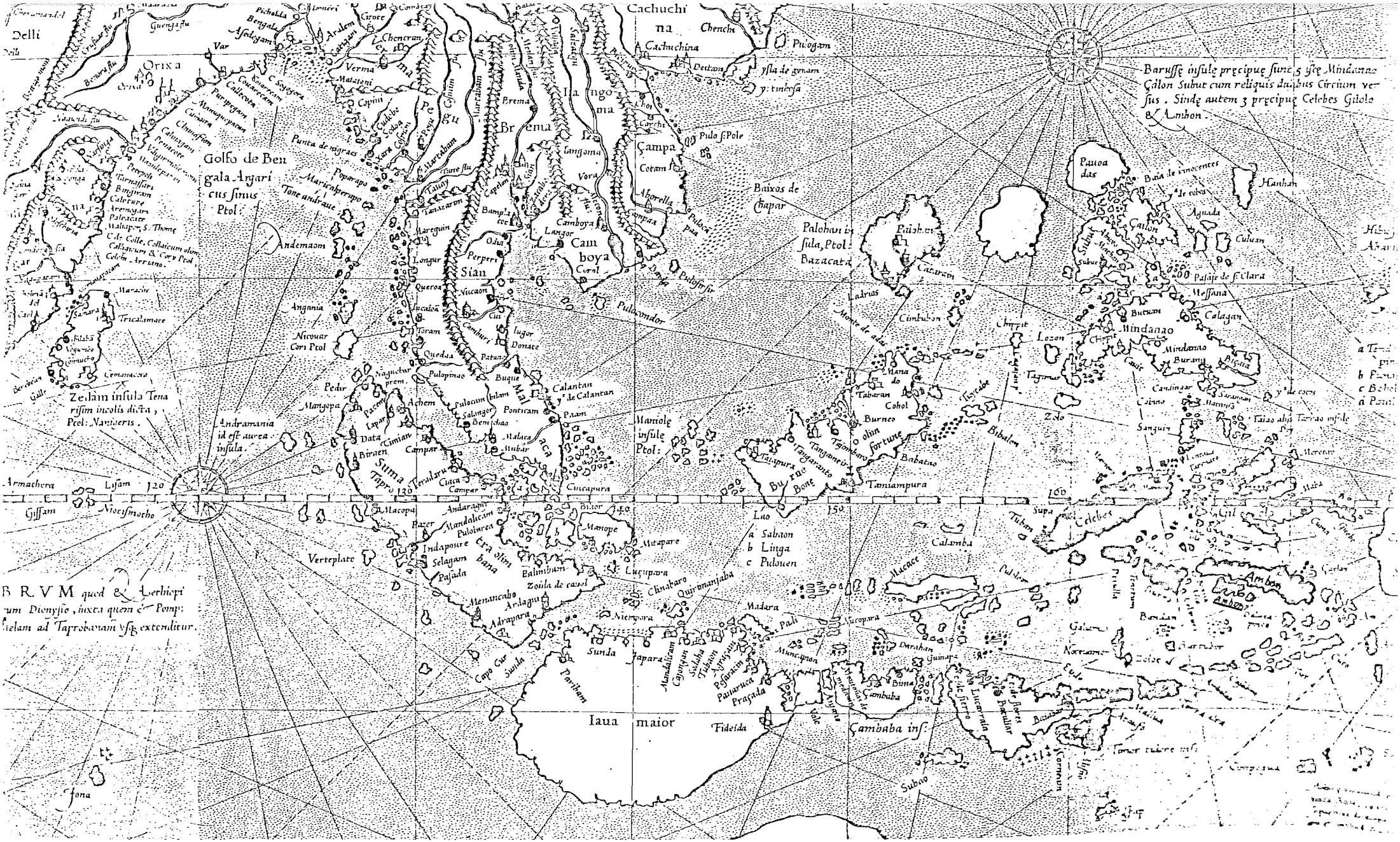
Those Ambonese who, in 1951, opted to go to the Netherlands, rather than become "Indonesians", must still

have been imbued with that age old bond of loyalty, or they would not have gone. Successive Dutch governments have, we would argue, failed to perceive this and limited themselves to accommodating them socially, while completely ignoring their political aspirations. The breach of the Sovereignty Transfer Agreement, signed by the Indonesian Republic, hardly raised any official Dutch protest at all.

This Dutch attitude must have been a bitter disappointment to the Ambonese who, considering their past, would have at least expected sympathy and understanding for their political ideals.

The more the Moluccans clung to the ideal of their independent Republik, the deeper became the gulf that separated the erstwhile allies. They did not want to be assimilated into a Dutch society they did not fully understand, nor did they want to become "Indonesians of Moluccan descent". And so a situation developed - surprisingly, especially among the younger generation, those who had left the Moluccas as small children or were born in Holland - that led to the terrorist actions in the Netherlands in the late seventies.

How little understanding the Dutch had for this "Ambonese Problem" was evident by the debates in the House of Parliament after the train hi-jacking in Drente Province, when discussion focussed on the question: "How do we keep the brutes at bay?" Only one voice was heard urging a look at Ambon's history.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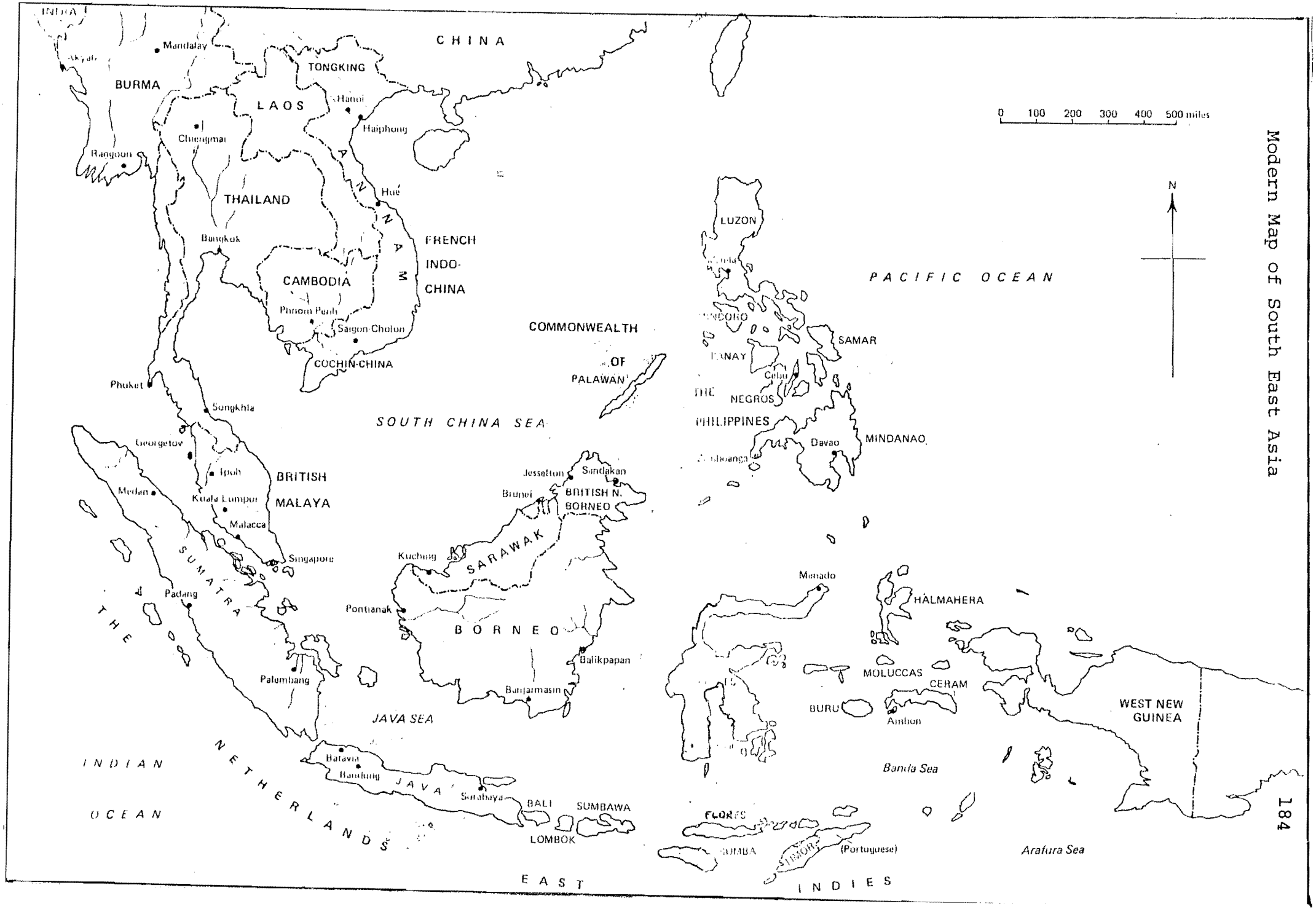
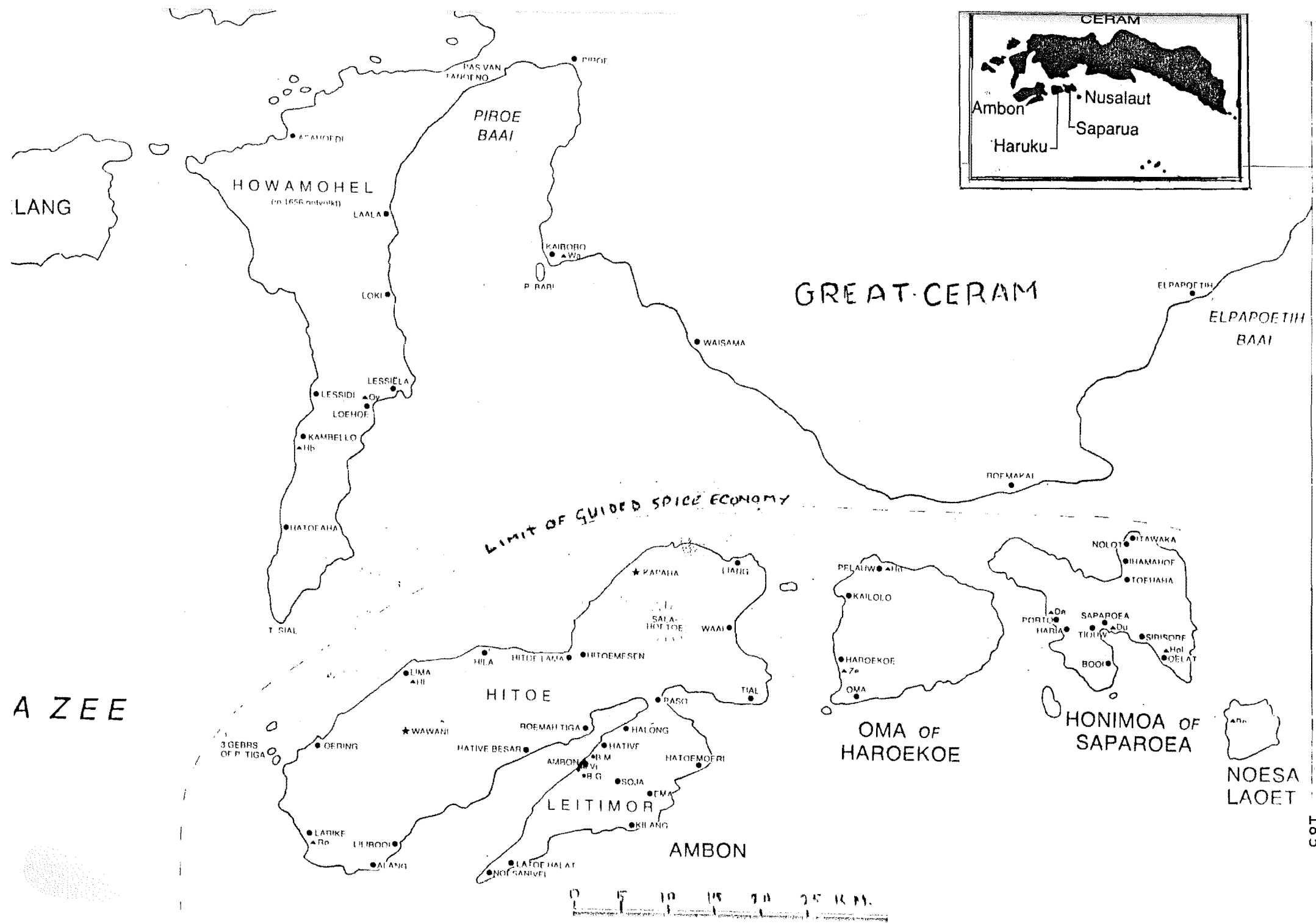
Sheet 13.
Publicaties van het Maritiem Museum „Prins Hendrik" no 6.
Supplement to Imago Mundi no 2.
Sixteenth Century Chart of South East Asia
N.B. Ceram has been mistakenly labelled Ambon.
183



Modern Map of South East Asia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HOWAMOHEL
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KAMBELLO
HATOEAHA
KAIBORO
P. BABI
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ELPAPOETIH BAAI
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LIMIT OF GUIDED SPICE ECONOMY
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